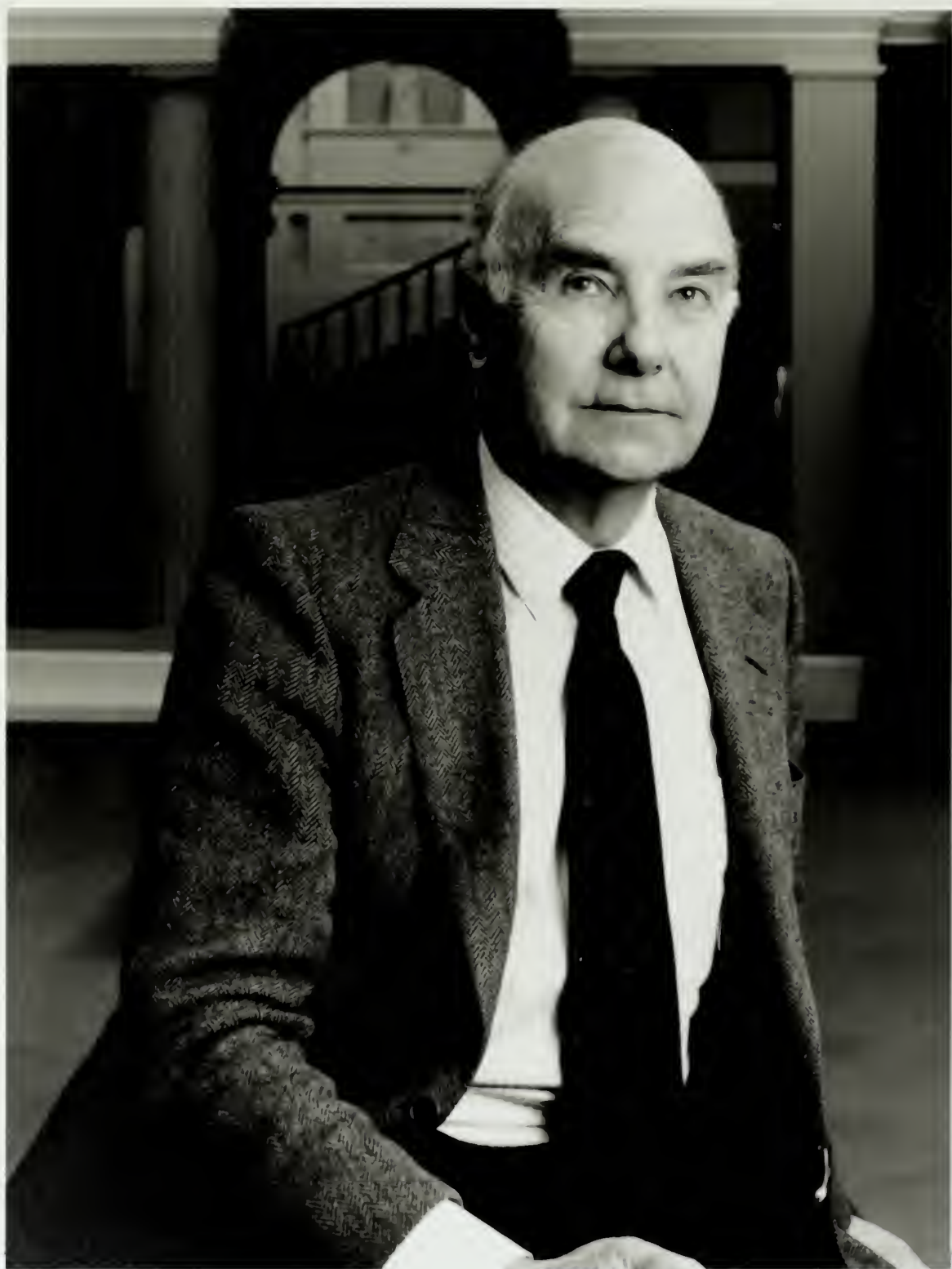




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EVIDENCE, INTERPRETATION, AND ACCIDENT IN ARCHAEOLOGY

John Boardman

Interviewed by Richard Cándida Smith and Claire L. Lyons

Art History Oral Documentation Project

Compiled under the auspices
of the
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Art and the Humanities

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Frontispiece: John Boardman in the Ashmolean Museum, circa 1992. Photograph courtesy of John Boardman.

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Richard Cándida Smith, Assistant Professor of History at the University of Michigan, and Dr. Claire L. Lyons, Curator for Special

Collections at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, interviewed John Boardman at his office in the Cast Gallery of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England. A total of 6.4 hours were recorded. The transcript was edited by Katherine P. Smith.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Sir John Boardman

Lincoln Professor emeritus of Classical Archaeology and Art, University of Oxford

Born August 20, 1927, Ilford, England

Education:

Chigwell School

Magdalene College, Cambridge, 1945–8 (Classical Tripos, Firsts)

Walston Studentship, at British School at Athens, 1948–50

Professional Career:

Assistant Director, British School at Athens, 1952–5

Assistant Keeper, Ashmolean Museum, 1955–9

Reader in Classical Archaeology, Oxford, 1959–78

Lincoln Professor, 1978–94

Conducted excavations in Chios (Emporio, Pindakis, Delphinion), 1952–5; Crete (Knossos), early 50s; and Libya (Tocra), 1963–5

Fellow, Society of Antiquaries, 1957

Cromer Greek Prize, 1959 (British Academy)

Fellow, Merton College, 1963–78; Subwarden, 1975–8

Visiting Professor, Columbia University, 1965

Fellow, British Academy, 1969

Corresp. Fellow, Bavarian Acad. of Sciences, 1969

Geddes-Harrower Professor, Aberdeen University, 1974

Hon. Fellow Merton College, 1978

Foreign Member, Royal Danish Academy, 1979

Hon. Fellow Magdalene College, 1984

Hon. Member, Royal Irish Academy, 1986

Visiting Professor, Australian Archaeological Institute, 1987

Professor of Ancient History, Royal Academy of Arts, 1990–

Membre associé étranger, Institut de France (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres), 1991

Hon. Doctor, Athens University, 1991
President, International Federation of Classical Associations, 1994–

Hon. Doctor, Paris University (Sorbonne)
Fellow, German Archaeological Institute
Fellow, Austrian Archaeological Institute
Fellow, Florence Institute of Etruscan and Italic Studies

Trustee of the British School at Athens

Delegate, Oxford University Press, 1979–89

Books (Partial)

The Cretan Collection in Oxford: The Dictaeon Cave and Iron Age Crete. Oxford University Press, 1961.

The Date of the Knossos Tablets (in *On the Knossos Tablets*). Oxford University Press, 1963.

Island Gems: A study of Greek Seals in the Geometric and Early Archaic Periods. London: Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, Suppl. Paper no. 10, 1963.

Greek Art. London: Thames and Hudson, 1964, 1973. French trans., 1964, 1985; Dutch trans., 1966; German trans., 1969; Czech trans., 1975; Greek trans., 1980; Italian trans., 1995. New revised edition, London: Thames and Hudson, 1985. German trans., 1988; French trans., 1989. Revised and enlarged edition, London: Thames and Hudson, 1996.

The Greeks Overseas. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, 1973. Dutch trans., 1966; Spanish trans., 1975, 1986.

Excavations at Tocra 1963–1965. The Archaic Deposits I (with John W. Hayes). London: British School at Athens Suppl. Vol. 4, 1966.

Die griechische Kunst (with J. Dorig, W. Fuchs, and M. Hirmer). Munich: Hirmer, 1966. French trans., 1966; English trans: *Art and Architecture of Ancient Greece.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1967.

Greek Emporio: Excavations in Chios 1952–1955. London: British School at Athens Supp. Vol. no. 6, 1967.

Pre-Classical: From Crete to Archaic Greece. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967.

Archaic Greek Gems: Schools and Artists in the Sixth and Early Fifth Centuries B.C. London: Thames and Hudson, 1968.

Engraved Gems: The Ionides Collection. London: Thames and Hudson, 1968.

Greek Gems and Finger Rings: Early Bronze Age to Late Classical. London: Thames and Hudson, 1970.

The European Community in Later Prehistory: Studies in Honour of C. F. C. Hawkes. (joint ed.) London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1971.

Greek Burial Customs (with Donna C. Kurtz). London: Thames and Hudson, 1971.

Excavations at Tocra 1963–1965. The Archaic Deposits II and Later Deposits (with John W. Hayes). London: British School at Athens Suppl. Vol. 10, 1973.

Athenian Black Figure Vases. London: Thames and Hudson, 1974. German trans., 1977; Greek trans., 1980; Italian trans., 1990.

Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Archaic Period. London: Thames and Hudson, 1975. German trans., 1981; Greek trans., 1985; Italian trans., 1992.

Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum III. London, British Academy, 1975.

Eros in Grecia (with Eugenio La Rocca). Milan: Mondadori, 1975. Dutch trans., 1975; French trans., 1976; Spanish trans., 1976; German trans., 1976; English trans., 1978.

Intaglios and Rings, Greek, Etruscan and Eastern, from a Private Collection. London: Thames and Hudson, 1975.

Greek Sculpture: The Archaic Period. London: Thames and Hudson, 1978, 1991. German trans., 1981; Greek trans., 1982; French trans., 1994.

The Greeks Overseas: Their Early Colonies and Trade. London: Thames and Hudson, 1980. German trans., 1981; Italian trans., 1986; Romanian trans., 1988; French trans., 1995.

Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae I–VIII. (joint ed.) Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1982–.

Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period. London: Thames and Hudson, 1985. German trans., 1987; Greek trans., 1989; French trans., 1995.

The Parthenon and its Sculptures. (Photographs by David Finn). London: Thames and Hudson; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.

The Oxford History of the Classical World. (joint ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986. Spanish trans., 1988.

Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Classical Period. London: Thames and Hudson, 1989. German trans., 1991.

The Crossroads of Asia (with F. R. Allchin et al.) Cambridge: The Ancient India and Iran Trust, 1992.

The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity. Princeton University Press. A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, Bollingen Series XXXV; London: Thames and Hudson, 1993.

The Oxford History of Classical Art. (editor) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. Italian trans., 1995.

Greek Sculpture: The Late Classical Period. London: Thames and Hudson, 1995.

SESSION ONE: 16 FEBRUARY, 1995

[Tape I, Side One]

SMITH: Well, as you probably know, we start with when and where you were born.

BOARDMAN: August 20, 1927, in Ilford, which in those days was in Essex and now is in the northeastern corner of greater London, very near the end of the new M 11; there wasn't such a thing in those days.

SMITH: Could you tell us a little bit about your parents?

BOARDMAN: My father [Frederick Archibald Boardman] had a job in the City. He was a sort of accountant/secretary to a small company of importers. I'm not quite clear what it was he did, but he used to go up every morning on the train to Fenchurch Street and back again in the evening. So far as I can judge, the earlier Boardmans had similar sorts of jobs in the City. They were in the accounting line of business. So that was his background. I don't know anything about his education, particularly, but he was not a very bookish person. His mother was Irish, which probably counts for a great deal. He was a rather imaginative man. I picked up from him the ability to want to start doing things, and never quite doing them right. If I'm required to mend a fuse, it will last for half an hour and that's it. My father would take up enthusiasms—doing fancy colored concrete, or carving little bits of wood, and then he would give it up after about a week or

two. But he got a kick out of it. He was always a happy man. He was a Christadelphian, quite a devout Christian. A very upright man, and very jolly as well. He came from an enormous family. He was the oldest of a family of eleven, all of whom lived, except him, unfortunately, to a very ripe old age.

Mother [Clara Wells] was of a smaller family—about eight of them. She was the daughter of a carpenter in Bexhill, the seaside place in Kent. She was, I think, the youngest of the family. She had no schooling at all because she had something like polio when she was very young, and she had her legs in irons, so she never got to school. She was able to dispense with them later and was perfectly all right. How my parents met I have no idea. But that was my mother's background, which was a good deal more rustic. There were three real aunties who seemed to know everything and remembered everything from the Victorian period. My parents were pretty old. My father was born in 1877 . . . a really long time ago.

SMITH: So he was fifty, approximately, when you were born.

BOARDMAN: Yes. My mother was forty-six, which in those days was rather unusual; it's rather unusual today. I was decidedly an afterthought. I had an elder brother, who was sixteen years older than I was, so you can see there was a hell of a gap. I was to all intents and purposes an only child. My mother had two brothers who were killed in the First World War, so I never had uncles on

that side.

The rest of my father's family was really a rather interesting group. One or two of them had some sort of inventor's streak to them. They worked with Ilford, Ltd., the camera people, and one of them is alleged to have invented—or perhaps it was the grandfather, who also worked for Ilford—these transparent umbrella things that you have for reflecting light on subjects. But they were all too stupid to patent anything they ever did, so they never finished up with much money. But it was a cheerful family group.

SMITH: What was the level of culture in the household? Was there literature? Did you go to the theater?

BOARDMAN: Not a great deal. I remember there was a glass-fronted bookcase at the bottom of the stairs which I put my head through when I fell down the stairs at the age of four. I remember that fairly vividly. I can't quite remember what sort of books there were in it. I think by that time it was beginning to fill up with my books. There were a few Tauchnitz editions of good novels. The public library was used, mainly by my mother. I don't think my father had much time. You know, you set off first thing in the morning, you come back late at night after working in the City. Weekends you potter about. So [my father] wasn't a bookish man in any particular way. My brother was a little bit more. He had left school when he was sixteen or so, but he was a good mathematician.

He made wireless sets; he had that family flair too, which I never quite picked up. His wireless sets worked, which mine would never have done. He was reasonably athletic and he played the piano.

SMITH: What did he go on to do? What was his career?

BOARDMAN: He went on to get married, which I'm not sure was a very good idea at the time, but he gave up his more semi-intellectual pursuits as a result of this and went off and lived in the outer suburbs of London. Since he was a good mathematician he went on to the accounting side of things, and I think when he finished he was working for the aircraft people, at De Havillands, as an accountant.

SMITH: Was your family religious? You said your father was.

BOARDMAN: My father was, yes, and my mother tagged along.

SMITH: I'm not familiar with the Christadelphians.

BOARDMAN: The Christadelphians are a good lot. They take the bible very literally. They don't like any sort of graven image, even a cross. They don't have formal sermons and prayers; they just exhort each other. They don't go falling about and foaming at the mouth. They have perfectly normal, straightforward hymns, and they do a lot of reading from the bible. They are a very relaxed, pleasant group. They still flourish in many places, and wherever I come across people who have known about them they have always rather

approved of them. I used to be taken along to some of the services. I didn't take them very seriously. There are still some about. Professor Wilfred Lambert, who is a Near Eastern archaeologist, in Birmingham, is prominent as a Christadelphian.

LYONS: They sound almost Quaker-like.

BOARDMAN: Slightly. They weren't really austere though. They had a good time. They exist in the States I think, too. (They started there, it seems.)

SMITH: I just haven't run across them. So, did you travel to the Continent as a child?

BOARDMAN: No. This was the sort of household in which you would have a Saturday at Southend, going on the train, and a week in the summer at Clacton or Margate, or somewhere like that. We weren't poor, but we certainly weren't rich. We never went without anything because we never looked for anything very much. We didn't have a telephone or a car or anything like that, but then in those days I suppose fewer people did. There was certainly no hardship, but no seeking after the excitements of the rest of the world. Before the war fewer people did travel, at any rate.

SMITH: I noticed that you went to Chigwell School. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

BOARDMAN: Ah, school. Well . . . let's start at the beginning. I went to the

local council school, the ordinary school that everybody went to. It was at the corner of the road, a nice old-fashioned Victorian brick building with asphalt playgrounds and all the rest. I went there at the age of five. I could already read and write then. I can't remember my father teaching me, but he must have done, and most of the rest of the school, by the time they were six, could [read and write] as well. This was old-fashioned, basic, fairly low level education which worked. [laughter] There were never any problems about it. This was a pleasant place. I don't think I shone particularly. I tended to be rather noisy in the class, I talked a lot. I got beaten once, I remember, viciously, which I resented enormously, but it was absolutely justified.

In my last year there, there were four of us who were reasonably bright, and we were put in for scholarships at the local public schools. I and another went to Chigwell, the other one being a man called David Howell, who is now a lecturer in education or something like that in London. I haven't seen anything of him. Another one went off to another of the local public schools and I think he's done quite well somewhere. The fourth one, who is by far the most famous of all of us, though I'm not sure if you will have heard of him or not, is Dennis Quilley, who is an actor. He's quite a star of stage, screen, and radio, in Britain at any rate. He's doing Falstaff in London now—a nice old man.

Essex County in those days was a very liberal place in education and had

a very high reputation for its educational facilities. I got a scholarship out of them, so I could go to Chigwell School free, as it were. The main snag was that in the summer of 1938, between the schools, my father died, and that nearly threw everything back because we didn't quite know what to do. But presumably he had been frugal enough to save, with some sort of a pension—I've not quite worked out how—for my mother and myself to keep going, as long as my education was being paid for. I think my brother chipped in a bit as well; he was not living very far away, so that was okay. Chigwell was a small, rather good public school. It had a very good headmaster, who came the year after, at the beginning of the war, a man called R. L. James, who went on to be the headmaster of St. Paul's School and then Harrow. He managed the place through the war, which was quite a difficult feat. He was not adequately appreciated, I think.

SMITH: Were you evacuated during the war?

BOARDMAN: No, I was living in an area which was evacuated, so all my friends in the street were evacuated, but Chigwell was just outside the border, where it was optional, and the parents decided they wouldn't evacuate. So I cycled to school each day—it's about ten miles—and I had no friends around me in the street anymore because they had all gone, so school became a much more important place. It's a nice school, a very old one. William Penn went there,

among other people. A nice countryside place. Now it is the home of Essex Man. Then it was really in the country; there were very few modern houses, and an old pub where Dickens wrote *Barnaby Rudge*—really nice. It's ghastly now, but it was and is a good school. It taught us very well. The war was a bit of a trial because where I was living was well within the bombing area, so I spent most nights in air-raid shelters—sweeping up glass and nailing up doors and picking up tiles. But that was all right. On our particular road nothing was actually destroyed within a hundred yards; just beyond that there were plenty of things happening, so we were reasonably lucky, but it was very noisy. To which I attribute my slight deafness now.

SMITH: Really?

BOARDMAN: Well, the doctor said, "You must have had a big bang early on, which is beginning to have some effect now." There were plenty of big bangs then, so I imagine that was it.

SMITH: Was it at Chigwell that you began developing your interest in Greek culture?

BOARDMAN: Well, being a scholarship boy I was obliged, as it were, to do Greek and Latin; that was what was expected. So I did Latin, which I didn't enjoy at all, but I very much enjoyed Greek. I think it was the way it was taught; that was superb. I loved it, though I wasn't terribly good at it. The only

things that I was very good at 100 percent of the time, were mathematics and science. But being a scholarship boy, you couldn't go on doing mathematics and science, you had to go on doing Greek and Latin, so when the time came to go into the sixth form, it was the classical sixth form I went into. I didn't mind. One didn't worry in those days. You did what you were told to do, and you didn't generally object. You made the best of whatever was offered. I don't know whether wartime conditions made one more fatalistic, but one was grateful enough to be able to keep going at all, and so one just accepted things as they happened.

So I went into the classical sixth, did Greek and Latin, got reasonably better at it and enjoyed it enormously. This headmaster, who was a classicist, was very, very good. He encouraged us without actually teaching us, without pushing us too much, but he made us excited in what we were doing, and this had a good effect. We got to the point in which we would begin to compete with each other for finding some author that the other ones hadn't read. We'd get the book out of the school library or the public libraries, which were very good in Ilford. Ordinary public libraries had all the Loeb's, for instance. Incredible, isn't it? So one would come back and say, "I've discovered Manetho over the weekend." That sort of thing. [laughter] And this was a very good atmosphere indeed.

There was only one thing that I think went a bit wrong, or at least held me up a bit, although I wonder if in fact interruptions don't help me rather than hinder. I've never been used to sitting and working for whole long periods of time. I'd much rather do lots of different things and things in between. But towards the end of the war, almost every year, I was ill for one reason or another. I don't know what it was, bugs around the place and I didn't have enough meat, or whatever. There was one year when it was a trivial thing, like chicken pox. The next year it was scarlet fever, which was in those days more serious than it is now, so I had to go into isolation hospital. The next year it was diphtheria, which in those days was a killer. But they were still experimenting with funny new antibiotics, which were also many of them killers, but they didn't kill me, they worked, so that was all right. All this interrupted things quite a bit, but it didn't seem to hurt. I could come out of it and then go off and have an exam and I did quite well. I think what I had once absorbed stayed there, and I didn't need to mug it up just before.

SMITH: What led you to decide to go to Cambridge?

BOARDMAN: The headmaster came in one day and looked around and said, "I suppose I had better be putting you in for scholarships. Well, you two go to Cambridge, you two go to Oxford." [laughter] It was as easy as that, and it's only on reflection one realizes that that was a very shrewd and careful choice,

and he'd thought a great deal about it. He'd got the right sort of temperament for putting [a boy] in for the right college. But it was done in such a casual way, and we had no really strong feelings. Nobody in my family as far as I know had been to a university before. I tended to back Cambridge in the boat race, so I was quite clear about that.

SMITH: Had he been attached to Magdalene, so that's why you went there?

BOARDMAN: He directed me to Magdalene, to go in for a scholarship there. I think the school had had one or two people go there before. One, who had gone just before the war, had been killed in the war, and a sort of connection had developed. There's a tendency in these schools to develop connections with particular colleges in Oxford and Cambridge. They get to trust each other. So I got a scholarship to Magdalene, and then a state scholarship through the ordinary A-levels and things. So that was free too. There was no problem with money there, except that I wasn't earning anything. I wasn't a help, but I wasn't a burden on the household.

I went to Magdalene, which was grand. It was a totally nonacademic college and still is; it's still always at the bottom of the list. It's just on the other side of the River Cam, and people would say, "Magdalene is so nicely placed—so that the young men will be near their horses." They tended to be the younger sons or the duds from Harrow and Eton who went there, but they had a

smattering of scholars, too, who were serious people like me. It was extremely pleasant. There were no great pressures. You were treated well. Although you had just finished the war and you still had ration books and all the rest of it, they immediately started serving breakfast in the rooms, which was the old, prewar tradition. They didn't keep it for very long, but one's porridge and dried egg was brought in, which was really rather grand; I appreciated that.

SMITH: You took a classical tripos?

BOARDMAN: I did the basic classical course, which in those days was a heavily linguistic one, nearly all literature, so it wasn't really doing much more than perfecting what I had already done at school.

SMITH: Did you have any interest at that time in art history or archaeology?

BOARDMAN: No. The little bit of it which was pushed towards us at school didn't attract me in the slightest; I thought it was rather boring. They handed round Roman sherds. I didn't want to look at Roman sherds. [laughter] My father used to take me to museums and galleries. I've got a very vivid memory of being taken to the Victoria and Albert Museum and seeing the cast gallery there, oddly enough, with Michelangelo's *David*; that made a great impression on me. We went to the British Museum to look at mainly . . . what I remember are the Assyrian sculptures. I don't remember anything Greek at all. I think my father had a keen visual sense and he liked to trail me along. I suppose he then

was pushing sixty, and he had a small boy as a son. He got rather a kick out of going through the same process of having a child around again, and I benefited from that.

In those days undergraduates went to lectures. They don't any more, but in those days we all went to lectures all the time. That was good because not only were there classicists there, but there were people like [Nikolaus] Pevsner giving those lectures on European art. Bertrand Russell was there doing introduction to philosophy. I went and sat and listened to all these, and I drifted into a couple of lectures by Charles Seltman on Greek art and archaeology. They were brilliant. Here was a whole new world, because one wasn't exposed to that sort of thing then in the way that schoolkids are today. They know all about it now, but then I hadn't a clue that there was anything like a Greek vase or a piece of sculpture which was actually relevant to the literature that I was enjoying. So I was hooked immediately. I didn't realize until long afterwards that Seltman was a bit of a charlatan, a rather doubtful dealer in coins. He was a very good numismatist. He put on an exhibition of Greek art in the Royal Academy just after the war and took us up to show us that, and that had some of his things in it, which have disappeared from sight since. But that hooked me and I took the special subject in archaeology in my last year in the tripos. So, to some extent, I specialized for, say, a third of the last year, on reading about art and

archaeology.

SMITH: Could you talk a little bit about the teachers that had the biggest impression on you and the kinds of problems they were posing to you?

BOARDMAN: I was only impressed by people who I listened to in lectures, and it was Seltman who got me onto archaeology. I went to lectures by John T.

Sheppard in King's, who was also a bit of a fraud, but he did inspire a real love and interest in Homer. There was a Roman historian called [Martin Percival]

Charlesworth, who was a brilliant lecturer too, and one really got quite as excited as he was about Augustus and all the rest. There were some very bad lecturers too.

In-college teaching was done by an extraordinary old man called Vernon-Jones, who was a total grammarian. He had Greek and Latin coming out of his ears, but it went nowhere beyond that, and if you ever wrote an essay which began to suggest that you had looked outside your authors he would get really quite upset about it—"You shouldn't be doing this, you know. We've just got to perfect your Greek and Latin." The major part of the exercise was to be able to translate the stuff. Jones made us read [Benjamin] Jowett's translation of Thucydides and [Richard] Jebb's of Sophocles, and said, "You must try to write as good English as that when you do your translation." One began quite deliberately to try to write not only an accurate translation, but in as perfect an

English style as you possibly could. That I think was the only positive thing that came out of that sort of teaching in Cambridge; it improved not only one's understanding of Greek and Latin, but one's English style. You actually thought about it: I had to express [something] in my language which had come out of a different language. And that was very revealing. I totally agree with those who say you learn Greek and Latin so that you can understand your own language.

The master of Magdalene in those days was a man called Allen Beville Ramsay. They tended to have ex-school masters from Eton as masters of the college, for obvious reasons, and he used to have what they called at school "saying lessons," which meant that in the morning, before you had had your breakfast but after he had had his, you went up there and you recited to him from memory a passage of Greek. At my time it was the *First Olynthiac* of Demosthenes. You went up and recited the first paragraph the first morning, and the next week you recited the first two paragraphs, and by the end of the term you were there for twenty minutes reciting from memory the whole of the *First Olynthiac* of Demosthenes. You didn't declaim it and wave your arms about, you stood to attention. You know: What do I want from my boys? "Accuracy, eloquence, and deportment, master." And you spouted all this Greek. It was in your mind; it meant that you had a ready-made model, as it were. If you were writing Greek yourself, you could tell: Is what I've got in my mind what

Demosthenes sounded like, or Cicero? No undergraduate would stand for it today, of course.

SMITH: It sounds very similar to descriptions I've heard of university education in the 1830s and 1840s.

BOARDMAN: Yes, this is what it goes back to. It was still being practiced in the older, bigger public schools in Britain, and this little bit of it was imported to Cambridge. I don't think any other college ever did it. There we were, like schoolboys, doing it. I went up at the end of the war, in '45, beside ex-servicemen who had just come off the beaches of Normandy or the jungles of Malaya, who were doing the same thing, and they didn't seem to mind.

SMITH: Was there any such thing as source criticism?

BOARDMAN: No. You took your text and you read it and you tried to translate it; you didn't worry about that. There was no serious history being taught in the way of thinking about sources and judging them, in the way that history is taught here, for instance, to undergraduates. No, it was totally linguistic, and at the end of it, yes, one could read Greek and Latin as easily as one could read English. One could write it fairly easily, prose and verse. And this was not a negligible accomplishment, if you were going to stay in the business. If you weren't, well, at least you might be able to write a decent report in English.

SMITH: Did you take any English classes, or modern history?

BOARDMAN: No. I would drift into other people's lectures if I thought they were interesting and listen to them, but I didn't take them very seriously. One did a lot of general reading. As I said, at home we had an excellent public library which one used heavily. I got through an enormous amount of modern literature and nineteenth-century literature—a Dostoyevsky a week, all the Russians and all the Brits and all the rest. I had all that by the time I was twenty or twenty-one. Not very much post-ancient history and not a great deal of ancient history. In fact, I think I probably learnt more ancient history at school than I learnt in university. I still remember some of it. It goes back to school rather than anything afterwards.

SMITH: What led you to go to the British School at Athens, then?

BOARDMAN: Well, having done archaeology in part two of the tripos, I put in for a university studentship in archaeology—particularly the Greek one, I preferred the Greeks to the Romans—and I got it.

In my last year in Cambridge nobody taught me, physically, anything. My college was fed up with me because I wanted to do archaeology and not philosophy or ancient history, which they expected a scholar to do. The archaeologists teaching there were Robert Cook and A. W. Lawrence, and they found they'd got enough to do just giving lectures. They didn't want to teach anything, so I was entirely on my own, and that was grand. I did what I wanted

to do in the way that I wanted to do it. So their effect was only as lecturers. Lawrence was an appalling lecturer and Robert Cook was a very good one.

I got this studentship, but oddly enough I hadn't a clue, really, what I wanted to do with it, except that I wanted to be some sort of Greek archaeologist. I was quite interested in the Bronze Age. I thought the Mycaeneans were quite interesting-looking people. So I went to see Frank Stubbings, who was teaching the Bronze Age in those days, but he was always out. So I gave up after a while and went to see Robert Cook instead. He said, "Well, don't do the Bronze Age, do something archaic instead." I didn't mind. You see, I'd no great burning motivation going, I just wanted to do the subject, and I didn't mind very much what. So he gave me a subject, which was to work on Melian vases, archaic vases, which was quite impossible because they were all put away during the war and at any rate [Christos] Karouzos was going to work on them, so that wasn't going to work. I went out to Greece and I soon discovered that I couldn't do what I was sent out to do, but it didn't seem to matter a great deal. I did a lot of traveling around the country, as far as one could. Greece was in a bad state then, in 1948; it was still having a civil war, and you had to get permits to get as far as Eleusis and that sort of thing. But luckily Mrs. Karouzos, who was in joint charge of the Athens Museum with her husband, was quite friendly towards me and she realized that I ought to be given something to do somewhere. They

had some of these vases from Eretria, Euboean vases, which were hideous great things which they hadn't bothered to put away during the war, so they were available for study. She said, "Why don't you study them?" I didn't care much what I studied, I wanted to do something, so I did these.

There was a similar amount of material at the site itself, on the island not all that far from Athens. It had been dug up many, many years before and had been put away during the war under the floorboards of a one-room shack there. As Claire will be able to judge from the way things have changed, nowadays one would never get permission to see that, let alone publish it, whereas in those days, one met the *ephor* who was in charge at a party and said, "Look, I'm interested in Eretria. Can I go and look at that stuff?" And he would say, "Oh yes, do, do as you like." So off I went and did. And that was fine, but this was again a case of teaching myself how to do it.

SMITH: Well, when you use the phrase "go study this body of work," what did that mean?

BOARDMAN: Well, it meant being aware of a British tradition in classical archaeology. You go and study some group of archaic vases and put them in order, date them, find if they've got artists, see how they relate with each other. This is what everyone had been doing in the thirties: [Humphry] Payne, the Cooks [Robert and John], Arthur Lane. This seemed to be in the right sort of tradition,

and this was a similar sort of job; the vases ran from Geometric down to the sixth century and there was a good range of material. It was quite interesting in its way. It didn't look terribly exciting, but it was there, and nothing else was there. So I went to Eretria and taught myself how to take photographs of sherds and how to draw profiles of them, and I put the whole lot together in a couple of years. Not for a doctorate, because one didn't bother, but for a publication, for an article, and that worked very well.

In between, one traveled around Greece looking at sites, insofar as one could—it was not too easy in those days. I went to Delphi with a man called James Holladay, who was a brigadier in the invasion in Normandy, and then a fellow of All Souls'—a historian. We went to Delphi and crawled around the site, which was totally open in those days, there was nothing going on. There was a curfew in Delphi, and you crept into your bed over the local cafe with gunshots on Parnassus overnight, and you came out again in the morning and wandered around the site and got on the bus back home. I saw a lot of Greece, nevertheless, in that way, and the conditions were good. All the sites were open, a bit rugged and untidy, but traveling meant something. It was not a matter of getting on a comfortable coach and going on a motorway. You had to take to donkeys or feet, and that was very good. Athens itself was a wonderful place. It was more like a big village than the ghastly city it is now. You know Athens, do

you?

SMITH: No, I haven't been to Athens.

BOARDMAN: Oh, it's a foul place, it really is. But it was wonderful in those days.

LYONS: Who was the director of the British School at Athens?

BOARDMAN: Then it was John Cook. The American School shares the same grounds, and we all got on very well with all the Americans there. We were nearly all male and they were nearly all female. These were the days of Evelyn Harrison and Evelyn Smithson and what's her name, the one who played the bouzouki—Anna Benjamin. So it was quite an amusing party then. Some of the other people in the school were much senior in years, like Peter Corbett, who was a fighter pilot during the war. They got out into society more in Athens, and they would bring in real Greeks and their families, so we would get to know them as well. This was my first taste, really, of cosmopolitan life. The first time I set foot outside Britain was to get on a train down to Marseilles and get on a boat to Athens. That was quite fun.

SMITH: Were there any seminars?

BOARDMAN: No. There weren't enough of us to have seminars; we learnt off each other. The only place where you could see anything was in the Agora excavations and their storerooms. They made us wonderfully welcome there, the

Americans. One used to go down there, day after day, and simply go over their shelves. It was the only place where you could actually see things and handle them. Everyone was very friendly there. Rodney Young was there, and Lucy Talcott, Homer Thompson, and all the rest of them. One taught oneself by walking around their shelves and looking at the things and pulling something out, and seeing Eugene Vanderpool go by and asking him what that meant and what this is, and you picked it up as you went along in that sort of way. Nobody actually taught, really, anything. Somehow one picked up a good deal more than they seem to today, when they are taught.

SMITH: What digs were you working on at that time?

BOARDMAN: In those days the school was digging in Turkey. You weren't allowed to dig in Greece because of the civil war going on, so the school had started a dig in Old Smyrna, with Turks, and I went to that for a couple of seasons. The first season I was in a trench with Sinclair Hood, who later became director of the school. [He] was a brilliant excavator, and simply by being in a trench beside him one learnt how to dig. You saw what you've got to look for, what you must do, what you mustn't do, how to record it, and by great good luck—good luck has played a very large part—it was a wonderful excavation with beautiful things coming out of the ground the entire time. In the second season, when he wasn't there, I was given much more head. I was clearing the temple

area, and there I was picking up oriental ivories every few minutes. One got rather spoiled in thinking this is what excavation ought to be like, which of course it isn't. But that was fine, and one learnt the business that way, through observing. There were very good people there too, like [Richard] Nicholls, who was doing mainly the architectural things.

You learnt the trade of handling whatever the earth gave you, whether it was pottery or ivories or bits of bronze, or a wall. You wondered if it was a wall or not, and whether you should move that stone, or if you moved that stone would you lose another wall—that sort of thing. This was the main thing one learnt from excavation: being obliged to handle and worry about unpredictable objects at unpredictable periods, rather than immediately specializing and saying, "I'll only look at the pottery," or "I'll only look at the bronzes, or the coins." So that was very good value, and I went through that for the two years I was in Greece. Then I came home, finished the article ["Pottery from Eretria"], sent it off, and went into the army for two years.

SMITH: You finished the article, so that completed your formal education.

BOARDMAN: That completed my formal education, and those two years were still financed by what they called a state scholarship. So my education from the age of five to two years research in Greece was state aided, and that's pre-"Welfare State." Lots of things happened then rather better than they do

now, I may say. You couldn't have done that now.

SMITH: Before we go on I wanted to ask you some broader, philosophical kinds of questions, or questions about your tastes at the time: were you reading modern literature as well?

BOARDMAN: Oh yes.

SMITH: Could you give us a sense of who your favorite authors were?

BOARDMAN: Well, I was reading virtually every novel in sight that had been written in the thirties. There wasn't a great deal coming out during and after the war, but I read [Evelyn] Waugh, [Graham] Greene, [Aldous] Huxley, as well as the older ones. And poetry . . . [T. S.] Eliot. I read quite a lot of [poetry] as an undergraduate too for some reason or another. I'm more of a sucker for earlier poetry—sixteenth, seventeenth century. I like that.

While putting my books in order, I've come across books that I bought in secondhand shops in 1944, 1945, which are anthologies of seventeenth-century poetry. It's rather funny, this. There was a play on the wireless—I suppose it must have been 1944—in which the heroine said, "If anyone recited to me the whole of Andrew Marvell's 'Had we but world enough, and time . . . ,' ["To His Coy Mistress"] they would be able to seduce me in a moment." So I spent the rest of that evening learning it by heart. I went back to school the next morning and discussed the matter with others there and discovered that one of the

others had learnt it by heart too, with exactly the same object. [laughter] The other one being Bernard Williams, who was at the same school. He was Provost at King's Cambridge, and had a chair in Berkeley, and he's back in Oxford now.

But that was the sort of range of poetry, and a lot of it comes back.

When I'm stuck in a car queue I can get a lot of it back. I picked up a book recently and I was surprised to find there a poem I had forgotten I had learnt. I was almost word perfect. I needed only a little bit of a hint of a line to get the next three. So there was a lot of learning by rote, which of course helped in reading Demosthenes' *First Olynthiac*. I can't say it's in the blood, but education a century ago was learning the epic poems by heart—[Thomas] Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* and the rest. One of my fine old aunts, Aunt Bess, could reel it all off. It was always, "Aunt Bess, tell about Horatius again." There was one poem she had about the death of Mary, Queen of Scots, [and] I learnt the last twelve lines or so merely by listening to them. Here's pure oral tradition, because it was only a few years ago that I ever found the text of it. So the denouement of the death of Mary, Queen of Scots, I had by heart from pure oral repetition, from an elder member of the family. That again is a strong educational factor which is totally neglected nowadays.

SMITH: Were you interested in "the modern"?

BOARDMAN: I was interested in almost everything, yes. I don't think there

was a great deal of very modern modern poetry about the place. Louis MacNeice was in Athens in those days at the British Council. I think one read slightly old-fashioned modern poetry by that time. One saw as much art as one could, but there was little to see. During the war the National Gallery would put one picture out at a time, so I know every square centimeter of Renoir's *Les parapluies*. [laughter] Every time I went up there I looked at it; it was the only thing to see. But one picked up a lot. [Reginald Howard] Wilenski was writing books at that time about Flemish painting and French painting. They look pretty old-fashioned and silly now, but they were the ones which taught us all we were ever likely to know about European art, down to the present day. And that stuck reasonably well. You could spot a Picasso or a Monet at fifty yards, that sort of thing.

SMITH: I wonder if you could just tell us a little bit about your impressions of the student community at Cambridge when you were there. Francis [Haskell] talked to us about his involvement with the Apostles.

BOARDMAN: I think my experiences of it were divided between the ex-servicemen and the schoolboys. I kept to myself on the whole, with a small coterie of very close friends of my own age who were totally diverse in their interests. I would say we were totally nonpolitical. One or two mainly interested in drinking, one only interested in women, as far as I can remember. One was a

bantamweight boxer; he was a wonderful young man. Another went on to be a schoolmaster, another one was an Irishman who went on to be an actor.

The man next door, called Freddy Gamble, was a third-rate mathematician. He said he could have been brilliant but he never had the energy to do it. He was a brilliant pianist, and I used to go along with him and sit in the background while he said, "Well, now I think it's about time I went through Beethoven's sonatas again." And so he did. It was quite clear he could have been a concert pianist, but he was too lazy. He guided my interests in music and poetry simply by living next door for just one year. He only came back into my life a few years ago. He went off and got married and finished up in the World Bank. He was really quite wealthy, living in Hong Kong. He died two or three years ago, a great benefactor of the college. But anything more highly intellectual than that totally passed me by. It may have been going on, I don't know. Nobody ever tried to recruit me for any nefarious processes—the KGB or the CIA or anything like that. [laughter] I think later somebody tried to get me to go and sign up to go off to Cyprus when the Cyprus troubles started, but I wasn't interested; I wanted to stay being an academic.

SMITH: Well, there are of course all these rumors, some of which have been confirmed through release of formerly-classified documents, about archaeologists serving as spies.

BOARDMAN: As spies. Yes, I think that was absolutely true in the First World War, and to some degree between the wars. Particularly in the Near East, absolutely true. I think after the Second World War not at all. In the Second World War, all the people who had been archaeologists were dropped into Greece to join the military mission and organize the resistance, so that all the older teachers here, for instance, and in Cambridge, were ex-servicemen who had served in Greece. John Cook was, for instance. But there was no intimation of that afterwards. You couldn't have exercised that function, I think, easily, after the war in the way that one could before. So I don't think that happened.

[Tape I, Side Two]

SMITH: You said you weren't interested in Rome, or you didn't care for Rome, and I wonder what it was about ancient Greece that appealed to you?

BOARDMAN: Purely the Greek language. I mean, I was taught it the right way. I was taught Latin year after year, writing silly little sentences which didn't mean anything at all. In Greek, the first lesson was to learn the letters, the second lesson was to start reading Homer. All right, the words were a bit funny, but [we were told], "Well, you'll find them in the dictionary." Immediately you were thrust right into the exciting stuff, and that was glorious.

SMITH: In some of the literature on the field of archaeology there's discussion of Hellenism as having a quasi-metaphysical view shared by many archaeologists

from the nineteenth century through maybe the 1960s. Does that make sense to you?

BOARDMAN: You mean the Greeks being great and glorious and prototypes of the British Empire and that sort of thing?

SMITH: Right.

BOARDMAN: One reads so much about it today one is obliged to think one must have been affected by it, but if I was I was totally unaware of it. I don't think I related anything that I was reading and learning about antiquity to anything that was happening around me at all. I think that was probably true of the majority of people at that time.

SMITH: When you were at the British School at Athens, your work of course was a combination of manual, technical, and intellectual, but what was the balance between talking about history and talking about the technical problems?

BOARDMAN: It was a fair mixture. The other people there were all, as it were, real archaeologists; they were doing similar sorts of things on pottery, architecture, working on the excavation in Smyrna. I don't think there was a great deal of high intellectual conversation about principles of historical research. They weren't fashionable in scholarship at that time, at any rate, and yet we had a wide range of people there from different universities, working in different subjects. They weren't issues that raised the temperature in any particular way;

they just didn't exist. You got on with what you were doing. You looked at what was available for you to study, you made the best of it, and you thought around it as far as you could. If you were bright enough you thought sideways as well and tried to see how it fitted in and what more you could make of it. But you started with what you had got. I can't recall any conversation of that sort.

The nearest I had to that was with a friend of mine, a man called Renford Bambrough, who is in Cambridge now and near retirement, a philosopher. He was a year older than I was, which riled him no doubt, because he thought he was going to be the youngest in the school and he wasn't. After a long night of drinking, or whatever it was, we walked it off in the morning and sat up over the stadium in Athens. Renford had gone out to Greece on a year's scholarship, and he was simply reading Plato in Greece. I don't know why he had to read Plato in Greece, but he thought it was quite pleasing. He said, "What on earth are you doing wasting your time on Euboean pottery?" I said, "Well, I know it's there, this is what one does, and you never know, one day it might have some sort of historical significance." Though I couldn't possibly think what significance it could have at the time. In fact it was true; it turned out to be very interesting and important. But I wasn't doing it because it was going to be interesting and important, I was doing it because that's what you do to be an archaeologist.

SMITH: Who made it interesting and important?

BOARDMAN: Well, that only comes later, and then it's a series of accidents, where things fall into place, and something different emerges, but you can't plan for that to happen. I wasn't planning for it to happen. I thought, "Right, I've done Euboean pottery, that's it. Now I'll do something else." But once you've done anything it never goes away, and it will always pop out again in interesting ways.

SMITH: Was there still a legacy from Jane Harrison or [William] Ridgeway in Cambridge?

BOARDMAN: Not appreciably, except that it was perfectly acceptable to read them and use them as sources. I don't think people were getting hot under the collar about their anthropological approaches being out of date or anything like that. So far as we were concerned they were simply further sources and further things that had been discussed. It's only in the last twenty or thirty years that people have worried about and begun to define modern periods of study which went in one direction rather than another. I'm not altogether clear whether that isn't pretty bogus as well, because though one or two scholars may have been operating in that way, most other people were operating in quite different ways. It's only in retrospect that they might appear to have had some importance or influence.

SMITH: To what degree was there—and I'm talking about the post-World War

II period—a living Arthur Evans legacy at the British School, or amongst the British?

BOARDMAN: I think we were all rather Knossos-minded, naturally. People from time to time would worry about whether the restorations were really quite right or not. They recognized that the way Evans worked and published was perhaps a little bit old-fashioned, but I think one took it in those days. Things hadn't changed all that much. Being an archaeologist in the fifties was not all that unlike being an archaeologist in the twenties and thirties. It only began to change dramatically in the sixties, so we were going on doing what people had been doing before. That's why I went into a subject in exactly the same way as my predecessors had in the thirties. There was no obvious alternative, there was no pressing need felt to look for an alternative.

SMITH: What about [J. D.] Beazley?

BOARDMAN: Well, not being an Oxford man, I'd heard of Beazley, but it hadn't got beyond that. Because some of the Eretrian pottery was black figure, I had to begin to look at Beazley's works. Then I said I'd publish the black-figure pottery at Smyrna that had been found, the Attic. So then I had to learn the Beazley method, and one learned that simply from his lists and looking in the books. I never listened to a lecture of Beazley's, but it's easy enough. Once you get into it you teach yourself, and my goodness, the system works. So, Beazley

was just another name to me who had produced useful books of lists. He wasn't a god in any particular respect, and I had no deep philosophical thoughts about the rightness, wrongness, or anything of his method, but I simply practiced it and used it on new material and found that it worked. Why should I worry any more about that, the way that people do nowadays with no good reason? I did meet him eventually.

One has to forget those two years in the army; that was a waste of time.

SMITH: In intelligence, as I recall.

BOARDMAN: Yes, that was a total waste of time. I can tell you about my army career if you like, but I'm not sure that it'll help you. I didn't do anything exciting, I wasn't crawling around the sewers of Vienna or anything like that. I was sitting very comfortably in the Intelligence Corps depot in Maresfield, in Sussex, coming home for long weekends, and doing no intelligence work whatsoever, except helping train other people to do it. This was the normal practice. Oh, from time to time we went and had a little military exercise down near the coast, ready to repel the Russian invasion. But it was never quite clear to us whether we were acting the enemy or the defenders. [laughter] So that wasn't a great success.

My only great success there: I was a very good shot. I won the officer's cup in the Intelligence Corps in 1952, so somewhere in the Intelligence Corps

mess there is a silver cup with "Second Lieutenant J. Boardman, 1952" written on it. [laughter] I only got that because the regulars said that they were either too drunk to shoot straight or not drunk enough. At least that was their excuse. But they didn't like the idea that a conscript subaltern should win their cup. It was even worse, because of the other ranks it was a private in the cook house, I think, who was the best shot. The veterans didn't like that either.

SMITH: You were about to say that you had met Beazley a little later.

BOARDMAN: Yes, I had visited him. It must have been while I was doing the Eretria pottery, before I went into the army. I just came up to Oxford for the day, and in fact they put me up for the night in Hundred Holywell, which was very generous of them. Lady Beazley was a ferocious woman, and said, as soon as I got in, "This house is organized for my husband, you must realize this; everyone else takes second place." She was really very kind and he was a very nice man. I showed him what I'd got, but that was my only contact with him, and one could only get the measure of his achievement many years later, looking back on it and working on more of it.

SMITH: You mentioned that you were over at the American School all the time. What about the French or the Scandinavian schools?

BOARDMAN: The Scandinavians weren't there. [Åke] Åkerström, who was setting up the school, was there, but he was living at the British School. The

British School was helping him set it up. The Germans hadn't got there yet, but they started again through the British School. [Emil] Kunze came and lived in the British School while he was setting up the German Institute. The French one did see quite a bit of. [Pierre] Amandry and [Paul] Courbin were out there then. But then when I came back to Greece as an assistant director of the school for three years, after being in the army, then I saw a good deal more of them. The Germans were established. One saw a lot of them. One still sees them too. [Ulrich] Hausmann was the assistant director then. The French . . . I suppose then it was Courbin, and the Italians, Doro Levi.

SMITH: What modern languages do you speak?

BOARDMAN: My Greek wasn't bad. Highly idiomatic. There was a party once at the British School and I think it must have been old Philadelphus there; he must have been a hundred years old. He was the director of the Athens Museum in about 1910. He was a very, very old rather distinguished-looking man. I thought I'd try out my Greek on him, so I spoke a few words of Greek with him and he answered me in French, saying that he saw that I had a very demotic accent. [laughter] So that wasn't a wild success. I had a good accent, and the only thing which still lets me down is vocabulary. But I could mimic reasonably well, and I find that an enormous advantage in attempting to speak any foreign language. If you sound as though you know it, you're half way

there. But my Greek was pretty good. French was appalling. German nonexistent, although I stumbled through a little bit when I was being interviewed for the Intelligence Corps, because they wanted languages. So I pretended I knew a little bit of French, a little bit of German. They pretty quickly realized I didn't know very much. Luckily the man who was talking to me didn't know any Greek, so I was able to impress him with quite fast Greek and I got in that way. I've become more and more embarrassed at the way that even French people nowadays speak to one in English. I have made fairly determined efforts over the last five years or so to speak French and German well enough to be able to keep my own end up if I have to. But I didn't bother particularly before. I just stumbled through a few words.

SMITH: Were there any particular differences between the national approaches to archaeology, the kinds of questions that they addressed, or methodologies that were striking to you?

BOARDMAN: Not I think in those days, because everyone was doing the post-excavation part of it in the same way, and they still do it now. They may add a little bit more science to it, but it's a matter of observation, description, and being intelligent about finding parallels. The process of excavation one was certainly aware of, having learnt it from Sinclair Hood in Smyrna, in the trench, and seeing his method, which was the prime British method as evolved by

Mortimer Wheeler and Kathleen Kenyon. He had worked with both of them, and one learnt the strict sort of stratigraphic method of recording observations and digging, which was very rare indeed in Greece in those days. One wandered around other people's digs and looked at them and thought, "My God. What on earth are they doing?" Even the Agora. In the Agora they never produce sections of what they have done; they dig architecturally, and by area. This was something that one was conscious of, and I think to a very large extent it was because the British School in various places was doing this that some of the other schools learnt it. One was quite conscious of the fact that we were on the whole doing this rather better than anybody else, and you could therefore trust the results better; you could make more of it. I don't think it was any more than that though, but it's quite an important point.

SMITH: Were there debates at the time that were of particular interest to you?

Debates in the field?

BOARDMAN: They were mainly about where the next meal was coming from, or what to do with the scorpions in your shoes. [laughter] An excavation is very, very hard work indeed. Very hard work. And British excavations are harder work than most. We usually lived in miserable conditions because there was no money. At the weekends, instead of putting your feet up and discussing the world and the future of archaeology, you tramped off and did a survey of the

next valley and tried to find some more sites, and it was quite a relief to get back to your trench on Monday morning. No, it was very hard physical exercise, and very rigorous.

SMITH: How did you learn about Egyptian or Roman or Near Eastern archaeology?

BOARDMAN: I left the school after being assistant director there, and in that period I was digging in Chios. Again with Sinclair Hood, where again one had the same sort of regimen, observation, and style of recording. But I left the school to come to Oxford in 1955. Well, that's forty years ago. I learnt about these other subjects in different ways in different places, and I think a broadening of interests came about through lots of different things. Never, I should say, by sitting down and telling myself, "Really, Boardman, it's about time you learned something about Roman or Egyptian," or something like that. When I first came to the museum here [Ashmolean Museum], there was a very, very small staff. The first afternoon I think, a young woman came in with an Egyptian ushabti and I was the only one there. Luckily I knew the word ushabti and I could find a book on the shelf which I could read out to her and tell her what a ushabti was. But that's one of the ways one began to learn about Egyptian things. There I was, at the museum, in a department with Egyptian objects, and there was no professional Egyptologist there, so one picked up a bit of it that way.

Another way in which one spreads is by being obliged for some other reason to move into a different area. The museum is an ideal place of course. If you're handling all the Greek and Roman antiquities because there's nobody else there, including sometimes the medieval English and the Egyptian, you jolly well have to learn what it is all about. In the four years I was in the museum, by the end of it I had to lay out and label all the late-dynastic and post-dynastic Egyptian collection, the Nubian collection, so one learnt it; you had to. You had to make the labels, you had to lay out the cases, read the dig reports, find out where the stuff came from. That was a matter of obligation rather than choice, but it was fun. Diversifying was always fun.

Roman I learnt only partly as a result of excavation, because there was a lot of late Roman material in Chios. The finds were only eventually published a few years ago, but all the work on it was done way back. Then I worked on iconography for the *Iconography Lexicon* [*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*], which started twenty years ago. There, if you take a subject, you take it right the way through Greek and Roman. So you're obliged not only to deal with the black-figure vases you know about, but also about the Roman sarcophagi, which, when you start, you don't know about, but when you've finished you do know about. This was very rewarding, so I feel more competent with the Roman side of it now. I don't like it anymore, but there are a lot of

great things I don't like. I don't think liking things comes into it very much. It's what one gets out of it.

You do eventually come to like things. I didn't like classical sculpture, I thought it was a dead bore. I thought vases were good value. Classical sculpture looked sub-Victorian. I imagine I only came to take it a little bit more seriously when I began to take an interest in the Parthenon and its sculptures and have ideas about its iconography. I then went and looked at it a bit more closely. I think it began to dawn on me that this was really rather exceptional stuff and there's something to it which is more than just what meets the eye. Oddly enough, rather in the same sort of spirit as the first British artists who came across the Elgin marbles in the middle of the last century and were used to ordinary neoclassical [Antonio] Canovas and the rest—if I dare mention Canova. [laughter] But they looked and they said, "Oh my god, this is all very, very different indeed." Then you go on to think, "Yes, my goodness, this *is* very, very different indeed." And then you begin actually positively to like it for its own sake. I think that one takes an absolutely positive pleasure in looking at some vase painting, though not all of it—nothing Roman that I can think of. I find it all derivative in one way or another.

Gems I loved. I haven't told you how I got into gems. But I love them because they're small, they're complete, they're original, and they are of very,

very high quality, and that somehow grabs you; there's nothing second-rate about them. Nearly everything is first-rate, and quality tells, after all. So do you want to know how I got into gems? I can never quite get away from them.

My only real hero in classical archaeology is not Beazley but [Adolf] Furtwängler, the father of the conductor, who died at the ridiculously youthful age of fifty-one, having really done all classical archaeology, every area of it, from the Bronze Age to Roman. He wrote his massive three-volume work on ancient gems, and I came across it in Athens and thumbed through it. I came across the archaic gems and I thought they looked vaguely familiar; they looked like what I'd seen on vases. When I was interviewed to come to Oxford, I was interviewed in fact at a coffee shop by the keeper of the museum here, who was in Athens at the time. I asked if they had a gem collection and he said yes, and Llewellyn Brown had been working on it. So I thought, "What a pity, I'd rather like to work on that." I found Brown had laid out quite a bit of it, quite well. But my interest stuck. Again, this was something different. One got so used to vases, and one was aware of sculpture and all the obvious things, but this was something new. You didn't come across it all the time, you didn't see much of it in collections; it seemed obviously related, but you couldn't quite work out how it related.

Then one day—again, most of my career has been dictated by

serendipity—a man came in who was the brother of R. M. Dawkins, a very distinguished British anthropologist/archaeologist, who died about that time. His brother came in and said he had found this old sock in his brother's possessions, and it was full of gems. He emptied them out on the table and this was a very rich collection of so-called island gems of the archaic period. That hit me at the right moment. He wanted to know about them and what they were. So I started taking them seriously, and then all the other ones like them. Then in this sort of collecting mania, which many archaeologists have and I certainly have, I ferreted around all the literature and all the collections—where can I find more and more of these things?—until I'd got three or four hundred of them. I put them all together and put them in order and found a date for them, and saw where they fit in the course of things. Having done that for the period in which I thought I was most competent, the earlier archaic, it was inevitable that in the course of doing it one handled more of the later ones, which were even more exquisite and beautiful and unusual. They were like the familiar things and yet unlike, and they had different motives, and different ways of doing things. So I moved into the later archaic and did a similar sort of mopping-up survey of them. I thought I might as well do the job properly and go on and do the classical as well.

Then again, just at the right moment, Miss [Gisela M.A.] Richter, who was a bit of a rival in this—she was producing her two big gem books at the

same time—put me onto an Italian in Lausanne, who had a private collection—Pappalardo—and he asked me to come over and publish some of his gems for him. That was one thing that happened. Another thing that happened was that I came across an impression of a very, very beautiful Ionian archaic gem, which had belonged to the [Constantine Alexander] Ionides Collection, and Beazley said he found the address of the owners. So I went and found them; they were living in Pont Street in London. So here were two private collections to sit and look at and work on. And that's one of the other things I had forgotten, which forces one into the Roman period: you are dealing with a collection. You don't choose what you are working on, somebody has already chosen that for you, and if a lot of it's Roman, you learn about the Roman ones, or the Hellenistic ones.

So I worked on these, and that made me think, "Well, having done a detailed archaic book, I ought to do one for the whole run of it, and maybe I ought to do the Bronze Age as well." I still had a hankering after the Bronze Age. I went to Thames and Hudson, who I had already been working for—they got me to write the little Greek art book—and said, "I want to do a big book on Greek gems." The man who was in charge of it then was the father of the present managing director, a man called Walter Neurath, who had been trained in the Vienna School, way before the war. As soon as I mentioned it he said, "Ah, you want to rewrite Furtwängler." He knew it all. I said, "No, I don't want to

rewrite Furtwängler. Nobody could do that, but I'd like to bring up to date just a part of Furtwängler." And he said, "Yes, I understand exactly what you want to do. I think it would be a very good idea. I suppose you'll need a lot of pictures, What shall we say, about a thousand?" I gasped, thinking that I might get away with two hundred. [laughter] But he had a concept of that book in thirty seconds, which I hadn't, although I had been thinking about it for months. And that was grand, so one settled down, one thought, "Well, I can have as many pictures as I can find and put in, and make it as big and as glorious as I like." That was a very important piece of encouragement. It isn't often that one can say that of publishers. But this was absolutely true in that case.

SMITH: Do you consider yourself an art historian?

BOARDMAN: No, I consider myself an archaeologist.

SMITH: But you do art history.

BOARDMAN: I do art history. I regard art history as a branch of archaeology.

SMITH: Is there a difference between the way you do the history of Greek art and the way an art historian does it—I mean a disciplinary difference?

BOARDMAN: I suspect there is, but I find it rather difficult, in a way, to define. If anyone were to come in here now and give me a scarab, I as an archaeologist would look at its back before I'd look at its front, because I would be able probably to typologize and date it by the back of the scarab rather than

the design on the front. An art historian would only look at the front, would never turn it over to look at the back, I suspect. Do you get the point? One is committed to a total knowledge of the material that you're dealing with in all its aspects as an archaeologist. An art historian will tend to concentrate only on that aspect of it which happens to catch his fancy or he happens to be arguing about at the time, and he might not think of all the other things, which I would find equally important, and possibly more important, because in the long run they will give the clue to something which you wouldn't have thought of otherwise.

SMITH: As you began to write about form and style and iconography, did you begin to educate yourself in art-historical literature dealing with those subjects?

BOARDMAN: Not very thoroughly. I suppose I ought to have done but I didn't. I read [E. H.] Gombrich and I thought that was great fun. I read many of these books about art-historical theory and archaeological theory; you know, cognitive and processual and all the rest. I usually find that I understand them when I read them. I sometimes enjoy reading them. Elements in them will stick and influence me, like Gombrich. The rest simply passes away because none of it seems to be relevant in any way to what I'm doing or what I want to do. It doesn't seem to help. Over the course of years I somehow feel justified in this, because it doesn't really seem to have helped anybody else either. I think that is probably less true of art-historical theory than it is of archaeological theory, but

the sort of art history I do doesn't get overly involved in this.

One does get furious sometimes with scholars—I won't call them art historians—who approach Greek art history from a purely theoretical point of view without knowing what it's all about—what the material is like—and they weave some quite wonderful stories and theories and models about it, which bear absolutely no relation whatsoever to the historical reality, or even the appearance of the pieces. They've never learnt to look in the way that an archaeologist has learnt to look, and they don't allow the objects to ask the questions. They've got their own questions and subliminal answers already and they just want to use the material to get the answer that way, and that I think is the way many art historians tend to work. I used to think that art historian was a rather dirty word, but I don't any longer.

SMITH: Did you have any interaction with the Warburg people? What about Edgar Wind?

BOARDMAN: Oh, Edgar Wind was a grand old man. [We didn't interact] on any intellectual plane, but we knew each other. We didn't talk shop. There were very few people, in fact, [with whom] I talked shop. I did in Athens, as a student. I wasn't taught in Cambridge by anyone. I didn't have tutorials to sit and explain why I thought different things. I suppose this is an odd career, in that you have to be so totally self-reliant. If I wanted to know about so-and-so,

I'd go and read about him and decide whether I liked it or not. I interacted a certain amount with Martin Robertson when he was here, but not very much, because he wasn't particularly argumentative; he'd tend to go along with other people rather than argue the point.

SMITH: What about chemistry or mineralogy or geology? The scientific stuff.

LYONS: Were you interested in clay sourcing, and that sort of thing?

BOARDMAN: Clay sourcing, yes. I think it's very important, but you can overdo it. That is to say, you can be overoptimistic about what you can prove. I got into the business of clay analysis fairly early on for archaic things. The whole process had already gone through the stage where prehistorians were jumping to wild conclusions, which were obviously totally wrong and which were then disproved quite rapidly afterwards.

Instead of taking the scientist's approach, in which you took two hundred samples without worrying too much about what they were individually, and getting a mean from that, which was a nice figure, I reckoned what one needed to do was take a dozen objects which you knew all about already and analyze them. Then you knew where you were with them and you had something you could compare with other things which you thought you knew about. So you worked from fewer objects, which you knew about, instead of wide masses of undifferentiated sherds, which you didn't know about. And that seemed to bring

results.

I did a fair amount of this, in various ways. A certain amount of it was published early on, a lot of the rest I simply collected material for and it got published in Richard [E.] Jones's book on Greek and Cypriot pottery, and I made odd comments on it along the way. That I thought was profitable and I still think it is, but it needs to be treated very, very carefully. There's a comparable thing going on now with isotope analysis of metals, which seems to be going through the same phase of making horrendous mistakes, but everybody saying, "Yes, we know this, we know that." You know deep down that they don't really know a thing. In another ten years' time they'll be throwing it all away. I'm sure this is right. The answer to the Getty kouros is in the hands of scientists, and one day they will come up with an answer which they will believe in too, which is the important thing.

SMITH: What about the role of the "eye"?

BOARDMAN: The eye is terribly important, but the eye has to be trained, and you've got to be trained on the right thing. When it's a matter of the kouros, there aren't many kouroi about; they run over a span of more than a hundred years and no two look quite alike. It's very difficult from simply looking at kouroi, to settle down at your computer and work out, what are the criteria of a real kouros? You can do it with Greek vases because there are thousands of

them. If you've looked at thousands and thousands of Greek vases, you know what a real Greek vase is like, and if somebody gives you a dud one, you say, "Oh, that's wrong." It may take quite a long while to explain why it's wrong, but you know it's wrong.

But it's not instinct; there's a great deal of absorbed learning and experience going into it. You can only really do that with stuff you've looked at a great deal. I can do it with Greek and Etruscan gems. I can't do it with Roman ones because I haven't looked at enough of them. The eye is terribly important, but it's an eye that has to be trained. There's no sort of "native instinct" that some people have. They can only get it from looking at the real thing and absorbing it so much that they can relate it to anything new that's given them.

SMITH: I'm still not clear on your work with the Eretrian vases. I'd like you to describe a little bit more how you arrived at what you wanted to do with those vases.

BOARDMAN: Well, it was very uncomplicated in those days. Once you had got them all drawn and got them all photographed and you had decided they went into this particular sequence and these particular groups, you gave little letters and numbers and dates to them, and you related them more or less to the pottery production of other areas at the time, you more or less left it at that. But there

were lots of other questions which turned up at the same time. It was quite interesting.

Not all that long ago I went back and looked at that old article on Eretrian pottery; it was written in 1950, before I went into the army. I read through bits of it, and I was very surprised to find the things that I was thinking about even though I took this rather deadpan view of this pottery. A lot of [it concerned] the iconography. Because there was a wedding scene on one, I thought I ought to find out about wedding scenes. So I did, and I went and found out and wrote them up as well as I could at the time. That sort of pottery study, even these dreadful Eretrian vases, leads you into almost every other corner of classical archaeology, history, art, of the period, and very often of later and other periods as well. I enjoyed doing this because I've always enjoyed diversifying.

Some years later I spent some time on political influence on vase painting—the subjects and this sort of thing. In that Eretria article from 1950, there was one vase where there was a figure who ought to be Nereus, but it was spelled Neleus. Looking back at that article, I was astonished to find I'd somehow picked up and spotted that this was just the time when Peisistratus, who said he was a Neleid, was in exile in Eretria. [In the article], I commented, "Could this have anything to do with the fact that Neleus might have been a rather popular fellow because Peisistratus was there then?" I decided it probably didn't, but I

was surprised that it had occurred to me then, and I think it was a matter of thinking, "All right, here are a lot of pots and here are a lot of sherds to be drawn and put in order, and every single one, or many of them, might suggest something else." Even then I was beginning to explore what that something else might be. In this case it was political and didn't seem to lead anywhere, but I thought of it and put it down. In others it was, "Well, what about marriage ceremonies. How do you use that vase?" That sort of thing.

I think this was the excitement of the whole subject. It went beyond the collecting and putting in order, which was an absolutely necessary preliminary step, but any corner of it could go off on a different tangent which could excite your interest. I think this was the motivation. I've never had any feeling that these were things which had to be solved and gone into and I was the right person to do it. I've rather let things happen to me, and then I've taken maximum advantage of whatever has happened and pursued it in different directions, so one finishes up studying gems on the one hand, and whatever it might be on the other, and all the threads in very uncanny ways sometimes run together again.

SMITH: What were the circumstances that pointed you to look at the political and social context of the vases?

BOARDMAN: That was started I suppose in the early seventies. That again was

accidental. It certainly wasn't a feeling that I wanted to discover the political significance of archaic art in Athens. I think partly what emerged from that short note in 1950 is that one thought of everything around anything one was studying, to see what it could relate to.

The main thrust of the other project, which was a long series of articles about Heracles' role in archaic Athens, started with having read or reread Herodotus. My love of Greek literature has never really quite disappeared, and from time to time I will pull down Herodotus or Homer and just read right through the whole thing again. I always finish up with a stack of notes on things which I hadn't remembered or seen before, which might turn out to be relevant. I was reading through Herodotus and I came across the story of Peisistratus in a chariot coming into Athens with a girl dressed up as Athena. I thought, "That sounds a bit like the vase scenes, let's go into it." You look into it and you find, "Oh, perhaps that's it! His going up to the Acropolis is rather like Athena and Heracles going up to Olympus." I put it into a lecture in Cambridge—slightly half-heartedly. I wasn't quite sure whether it amounted to anything, but then I sat and thought about it a little bit more, and lots of other things began to fall into place, or seemed to me to fall into place.

The extraordinary thing is that it was quite well on in that study before I remembered not that I had made that remark on the Eretrian pottery, which I had

totally forgotten about, but that I had also been involved in this [subject] before, in helping H. W. Parke of Dublin write an article on the First Sacred War at Delphi, which he had been writing with [Thomas J.] Dunbabin [before Dunbabin died], which exploited this sort of thing—the iconography of the fight between Heracles and Apollo and how it related to the First Sacred War. I wrote up that part of it for him in the way in which Dunbabin had left his notes for it. I had totally forgotten that I had done that already. It wasn't originally my work, and so it had gone out of my mind, and it was quite a shock, you know—I've been here before. Then I looked at it again, and decided that yes, that was a sensible association to make, but we got it the wrong way; we've got them on the wrong side, as it were. But it developed through an observation which was sparked by a text in this case, which then brought into my mind lots of other pictures which might be related to it as well. Through working in a museum and working in an excellent library, and if you've got a good visual memory as well, you begin to acquire an enormous database of things which spark off a recollection, and they began to fall together. But it wasn't a program.

I think the next article I did was the Eleusis one, which seemed to make certain sense. But I didn't sit down and say, "Now let's look at all the Heracles [material] and make a whole program of the thing." It trickled out as something else occurred to me, into yet another article, all rather disorganized. I suppose if

I'd been a different sort of person I would have sat on that, kept quiet about it, and in the course of five years written a whole book about it. But I didn't want to do that; I was doing too many other things. So I would work it up and then put it away probably for six months. You have to let it settle for a while and then come back and say, "Yes, it still looks all right. We'll publish that." It was an accident, a pure accident.

SMITH: I was reading an essay by Nikolaus Himmelmann where he says that there's not a whisper of the social discontent that was wracking Athenian society in the seventh and eighth centuries in the Greek vases from the same time. Do you remember seeing that?

BOARDMAN: Well, I think that's very likely, but perhaps we don't know what to look for. He's about my age and we belong to a period in which we expect social discontent to emerge in every possible corner of everything we do. I don't think it necessarily did in antiquity. If we hadn't got the history books telling us about the Persian Wars, you would never have guessed from Athenian art that there had been an invasion of Athens and the whole place had burnt for two years running. People can begin to look for things which aren't there; they are there today, and they do emerge in all sorts of ways, but we're not entitled to assume that it was exactly the same in antiquity.

Art wasn't serving the same function then as communication does today. I

don't know how much social discontent and dissent there was in seventh- and eighth-century Athens. I suppose a few rich families were getting rather fed up with each other and most of the populace was carrying on as usual as it always does. The land, personal safety and security, and the sort of semislavery developing in Athens as you go on through the seventh century didn't have to affect the way you decorated vases for [what were] not many people. I don't know that you have to look for it. It's worth looking for, yes, but you don't have to find it, and if you can't find it, you should say you can't find it and not go and spin a story saying that you have. Robin Osborne tried to psychoanalyze seventh-century Athenians from their art.

[Tape II, Side One]

SMITH: I wonder if you could give us little portraits of some people and the first person I think would be Cook.

BOARDMAN: John Cook, or Robert Cook? Robert Cook is the brother who was a lecturer and then professor in Cambridge, and John Cook was the director of the British School at Athens, who was in Edinburgh and then went to Bristol. He died last year.

SMITH: Let's start with Robert, and go on to John.

BOARDMAN: Robert Cook was the elder of the two brothers. There seemed to be very little rapport between them, and yet they were in the same business.

They were doing the same sort of subject in Athens, one two years after the other. Robert Cook is a very dry man, heavily skeptical, with a wicked sense of humor. His lectures were very precise. You had to be sharp to recognize the humor that was in them, and it was only when I came across the notes I took that I realized how much I had absorbed from those lectures. Many of my instinctive ideas about things I had in fact picked up from lectures by Robert Cook, rather than having acquired them for myself.

His approach was to never take anything at its face value, sometimes rather mischievously denying what otherwise might appear to be obvious. I think that probably was in its way influential. I must have been inclined to want to do that sort of thing at any rate, and the more you look at things the more you begin to worry about whether you're seeing what you ought to be seeing. But this was his forte, and it comes out a lot in much that he's written, usually in small articles. He's done very little in the way of major publication. He did a Greek painted pottery book, which is still a fairly standard handbook, but it's a bit too bland. He tried to get too much in, and he hadn't quite got the technique of packing it in well, so that there's not quite the detail there that you want. Much more recently he did a bigger book on Clazomenian sarcophagi, which is a good old-fashioned monograph where everything is there and it's all covered properly. Then he wrote other little articles which would dart off sometimes into history

and sometimes off into technology, always very perceptive and very well worth reading. I like him very much, I see him from time to time. He's still very sharp, incredibly so. Still working, still writing.

SMITH: Could I ask you to unpack the phrase "covered properly"—what you mean by it?

BOARDMAN: It's all there: all the numbers, all the measurements, all the descriptions; it's looked at back, front, sideways, and everything is related to everything else; hands where possible distinguished, dates sorted out, the problems faced and laid out. If you haven't got an answer, you haven't got an answer. There's another thing I think one probably learns from Robert Cook: you don't pretend you've got an answer if you haven't got one. There's nothing to be ashamed of in saying you don't know. And occasionally one should say not only do you not know, but you will never know. This is a healthy way of going about things. It's a very old-fashioned book, and like most such old-fashioned books it will last for the next generation or so. There are some like that about. Cook's teacher, Humfry Payne, was like that. He wrote a book on Corinthian pottery [*Necrocorinthia*], published in 1931 I think.

SMITH: Did you know Payne?

BOARDMAN: No, he died in 1936. It is still a very valuable book. If anyone wants to know about Corinthian art they go and read Humfry Payne's 1931 book.

You don't go and read [Darrell A.] Amyx [*Corinthian Vase-Painting of the Archaic Period* (1988)]. You don't go and read any of the new books that have come out about it. All the things that have been found since will adjust it in various ways, but the thought about it, the way it related to the rest of Corinth and all the other arts of Corinth, [Payne] saw and could put down. Well, Robert Cook's [book] on Clazomenian sarcophagi is a much smaller area, but he has done the job properly; he has covered the field. Unlike works which are motivated more from trying to demonstrate theory, which will last as long as the theory lasts, which is not very long nowadays, Cook's works will stick; they will last, they will go on being used, and they will provide reliable fodder for other people to work from and theorize about. But that's what you have to start with. At least that's where I feel you have to start.

The other Cook, John Cook, was a very different sort of person. He was a much more poetic man, I think. He wrote very elegantly, wittily. I've been writing his obituary quite recently, so I'm quite well up on him. He was heavily influenced in his approach and career by his wife, who was a Scots girl who was equally brilliant academically. Do you know *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*? She went to that school; she was the crème de la crème of the period in which Muriel Spark was being inspired by it. She was wonderful. She was very supportive, very thoughtful, and she made him a much blander, pleasanter

character than his brother, who has always been rather sharper, prickly.

John was not a terribly decisive man. He really wanted to be allowed to get on with what he wanted to do in his own way, which I must sympathize with. He was rather forced, first of all, in the war, to going and being dropped in Greece and doing all these things that he obviously wasn't much cut out for, but he did pretty well, he did what he could. Then he was forced into being the director of the British School at Athens, to get it opened again after the war. It wasn't his sort of thing, administratively, but with the help of his wife he managed very well and got that done. He decided fairly early on that this specialization of classical archaeologists was really rather a bad thing, that it needs too much time sitting in one place and doing the same thing; he wanted to broaden his horizons. He belonged to the 1930s generation of British archaeologists who spent all their time tramping up and down Greece at colossal speeds, you know—to Marathon and back before breakfast sort of thing. I'm not that sort.

Cook did survey work in large tracts, mainly of Turkey—Troad, Caria—but in a very modern manner. He was doing historical geography, demography, taking account of all sorts of sources—Ottoman sources, census reports of modern Turkey, all that sort of thing, which, a generation later, people were thinking of as a new subject. He was doing it already, in a more old-

fashioned way, through really hard slogging around the countryside, looking and learning as he went along and putting it all together. He got very scathing about the latter-day people who would just stop the jeep long enough to ask whether there were any inscriptions and then drive off again. He had been walking all over the place, and the results were things which were significant historically as well as archaeologically. He did very remarkable works of this sort, which don't make a great deal of impact immediately but which are appreciated more by the historians on the whole than the archaeologists, and that I think pleased him a great deal.

His wife died, unfortunately, which shattered him rather, and he finished up in his later life doing a history of the Persian empire, which, again, he did very well indeed. The Persocentrics rather disliked it. They said there was too much Greece in it, but there wasn't. He was very careful to have no more Greece in it than there had to be, which wasn't necessarily a lot. He was very strong on the historical topography, and he went all over the place. He went all over Turkey and Afghanistan, which none of the Persocentrics have done. Most of them have never been to Persia, as far as I can see. It's a very good book. But he was a totally different character from his brother. His brother taught me because I listened to his lectures. I suppose John Cook never really taught me. He was about the place when I was a student there and he was somebody to talk

to, but there was no positive teaching.

LYONS: You started just momentarily to mention Martin Robertson and how he wasn't an argumentative man.

BOARDMAN: I only knew Martin while he was here as a professor. I'd met him before, in London, then he came [to Oxford] as a professor. Martin is very clever; he's a very perceptive man. He gets on with his own work in his own way in his own time, but he doesn't consult other people about it very much. There was never a question of passing around an article or, "Have a look at this chapter. Have you got any ideas on that?" Never anything of that sort, so there was not much interplay. I would try it with him, but the result would be very often, rather as most of his pupils found, that he would just say, "Splendid, splendid. Get on with it." It seemed to work, in fact. There wasn't much interplay, but one's bound to admire enormously his perceptive skills in Greek art. He is an art historian, but he's an art historian who had trained for a long, long time in a museum and not in a library, so he's an object person, essentially, and a bit old-fashioned. He's a bit over-generous to the madmen about, or at least tolerant of them, which I don't think one should be. I can't say much more than that.

When he was here we didn't impinge on each other. I would show him things occasionally. He worked steadily at things. He was going to do this big

book on Greek art, so he spent many, many years doing that, then he was going to do his book on red figure, and they are very all-embracing subjects, but they never produce any spin-offs. He never in the course of working on things thought, "Oh well, here's something one should think about, let's write it up." Whether it's because he wasn't thinking of it or he didn't regard it as important, one can't tell. It's very difficult to fathom.

LYONS: Was there more to and fro with [Bernard] Ashmole?

BOARDMAN: Ashmole. A total different person. Have you read his autobiography?

LYONS: No, I've seen it but I haven't read it.

BOARDMAN: He was a man of the world. He had a distinguished army career in the First World War and the Second World War. A chair in London. He ran the British School at Rome for a while, ran the British Museum department—packed it up before the war and unpacked it after the war. He was a rather cold man, frankly. You could never quite work out what he was thinking. He was always very kindly and helpful, but he never gave himself away, and when you read his autobiography you see it's a very interesting life, but you are no closer to knowing what he was like at the end of it than you were at the beginning.

He was a very perceptive scholar in sculpture, but it was difficult to learn it by merely reading [his work]. I more than once said, "Why don't you simply

write down what it is you have to do when you look at a piece of sculpture?"

How does one look at a piece of sculpture? I've never learned how to do it. I'm very mistrustful. Given a piece of sculpture, like that head up there [points to a cast in the room], I don't know what you do. I'd have to say, "Well, here's a grinning head of a satyr-like creature. Let's go and look at some other grinning satyr-like creatures and see what they look like." Ashmole would say, "The eyebrow has been reworked," or, "The back of the head might have been recarved. I think that treatment or technique belongs to such-and-such a period." None of our sculpture experts ever sit down and write and tell you what they're looking for. One begins to wonder whether in fact they don't know what they're looking for, but they are going by gut reaction, which might or might not be based on considerable experience of what is genuine or real or untouched or not. But Ashmole never responded to that; he never rose to the bait.

You only learn from these people—you know, the Brunis (Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway—Bryn Mawr) and the rest—by listening to what they say, and I don't know that they ever walk around a sculpture gallery and say, "Now this is what I look at." If somebody brings in a new head, what do you look at? I know what to do with a vase. I could tell anybody what to do with a vase, but I couldn't tell them what to do with a piece of sculpture, and nobody else has ever written it down and told people what to do.

SMITH: Well, you've written a whole book on sculpture [*Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period; a Handbook*].

BOARDMAN: Yes, I've written a whole book on sculpture, but my book on sculpture is a handbook for the intelligent student. If my handbooks, including, in a way, the Greek art book, have had any success at all, it's because I was learning the subject while I was writing them. I think the Greek art book, which I'm beginning to think of revising now, was reasonably good, or it went over well with the audience because they were in the same state as I was when I started doing it. I was writing at a time when I still thought classical sculpture was rather a waste of time and I didn't know a thing about the Hellenistic period, so I had to learn enough about it to be able to write the book at the time. It was all a bit of a con, but I worked hard enough to get things basically right. I didn't make any mistakes in it, and I don't think there are many misconceptions, though I'd like to revise it now and change things around. It might not be any better as a result.

I wrote the sculpture book as much as anything because I had to start learning about sculpture. When I got the teaching job here, having come out of the museum, I had to start lecturing on sculpture, so I had to learn about it. If you start teaching about sculpture you begin to perhaps see things in it; you begin to think about it in different ways. You begin to realize that in trying to learn

about the subject. There didn't seem to be any books about which were going to be any help. Miss Richter was a bore. There were no other textbooks which told you anything. None of them had the right pictures in the right place, and they dwelt on what seemed to be the uncertain things, you know, about attribution and things like that, rather than on the certain archaeological things: here is a statue, it is this size, it's this date, this is what it means, this is where it stood, this was its function.

There was something else which led me to write the handbooks. You know [Franz] Winter's *Kunstgeschichte in Bildern*—many, many photographs of all the art objects of the period with little captions, which came out, I suppose, early this century and which was very useful. I came across an old copy of it and it occurred to me that it would be nice to have some of these now with a bit more text to them. It was quite deliberately to try to produce something which had more of the pictures, with enough of the text to understand and put them together, for a student, because that's what I could never find anywhere. I thought it would be a good opportunity if I could sit down and write it. And that's why the vase and the sculpture handbooks were written. I was learning the subject as I went along, through it, and then passing it on, and it seems to have worked.

I don't regret very much about what I've said in some of those earlier

books. I don't think learning more about it has changed them a great deal, because they weren't terribly overambitious; there's no fancy theory thrown in there. I think there's quite a lot of perception because one went along and one started seeing things that perhaps one didn't find in the textbooks, and odd remarks about them would slip in as well. The most embarrassing feature of which was in one of the sculpture books, actually. I came across a [Claude] Bérard article. You know Bérard; he's a wonderful madman and he was here in Oxford for a couple of years. He had some comment in an article of his about the archaic buildings on the Athenian Acropolis, saying he wondered whether any of them could in fact have belonged to the palace of Peisistratus. Tyrants had palaces. I thought that sounded like a good idea. I wrote to him and said, "Have you developed this anywhere?" I didn't get any answer from him, and I met him in Italy. He was terribly embarrassed. He didn't know whether I was fooling him, and he said, "I got it from you." There it was in one of the handbooks. [laughter] But that was a case again of me going over familiar material, when it occurred to me, "I wonder if that couldn't be right. Let's just slip it in as a suggestion." He had picked it up and I had totally forgotten about it. So those handbooks are a little bit more than a student crib, because each piece has been thought about a bit and if there's anything more to say about it, it's got in there as well.

LYONS: I've always found the more unusual bit of iconography or something that was unexpected.

BOARDMAN: Yes. Well, it's fun. I get a kick out of it all. I don't have any hobbies, I just get on with these things, and if I get bored with one thing I go and do something else. But I don't collect stamps or dig the garden or anything like that. Perhaps I ought to.

SMITH: In 1952 you went back to the British School at Athens as assistant director.

BOARDMAN: Yes, that was at the end of the army. I got married and went out to the British School for three years.

SMITH: So you were the number two person at the school at the time?

BOARDMAN: Yes, and John Cook was the director for two years, and then Sinclair Hood became director for the last year.

SMITH: What were your main activities during those three years? Was it Chios?

BOARDMAN: Chios was where the digging was being done, which involved also research work on the finds. I'd become interested in votive plaques and funeral plaques, and I can't for the life of me say why. I've just no idea, I can't remember. I think because they were different, you know, they were pottery without being pottery. They weren't vases, they were pictures. And they needed

putting in order, so I put them in order. Then one started finding out interesting things about them, which related the funeral plaques to burial customs, and the votive plaques to the general interests of votive dedications and sanctuaries. So when I came to have to write up the excavation of a sanctuary and its votives, I made a point of making a separate section on the objects as votive dedications, not just series of bronzes and terra-cottas; it all spread from one thing to another. What else did I do when I was there? I was doing the Smyrna black figure, I suppose; that was going into Beazley territory.

It was a busy job being assistant director of the school in those days because there was a very, very small staff indeed; one was a librarian, and was running a hostel with students. I obviously did a lot of reading around the place, but when I come to think of it I wonder if there was that much academic work done apart from the plaque articles and Smyrna. It was all right, but it wasn't much fun spending the first three years of one's married life in one room in the school hostel! The school was terribly mean in those days and hadn't got any money, so my wife had to go out and teach English to be able to pay the rent each month.

SMITH: Could you tell us a little bit about your wife [Sheila Joan Lyndon Stanford].

BOARDMAN: I met her in Greece, she came to the Smyrna dig. She was an

artist, as much as anything. She comes from Surrey, a moderately well-off family. She was very adventurous, much more adventurous than I was. She had already buzzed off to places like Iceland and Norway and learnt her art and drawing in Oxford and then came out to Greece and went around to one of our digs. I was in the army then, two years, and Sussex wasn't very far away from her home, so I had plenty of free time at the weekends. We got married at the end of my army career. She has continued since, mainly, to look after me, which is just about a full-time job, and look after the house and look after two children, and she gets on with her art as she can in the time. She's done some book illustration. I depend on her totally.

SESSION TWO: 17 FEBRUARY, 1995

[Tape III, Side One]

SMITH: We have a couple of follow-up questions from yesterday, and you may have something that you'd like to add. Going back to the statement you made about the difference between the U.S. and the U.K. schools in Athens when you were there in the fifties, you observed that the U.S. school had a high percentage of women and the British School did not. Were there women working in British archaeology at all at that time?

BOARDMAN: Oh yes, but I only really recall one woman student in the British School during that time, and there were one or two men around in the American School. Why that was I really don't know. I think probably there were fewer women in British classical archaeology in those years. I'm not even sure that that's true. I think it was just accident as much as anything.

SMITH: I was wondering if that might have something to do with the nature of the Oxbridge system.

BOARDMAN: That would naturally tend to foster it, because most of these studies were being done at the ancient universities, where there was a heavily male-dominant population, and it's only with the passage of years since then that other universities have had bigger and flourishing departments. Both Oxford and Cambridge of course have admitted more women and there are more about now.

But I don't even know that one can say that there's a particular appeal in the subject which goes more to men than to women.

SMITH: One of the things that is clear about many of the Americans who were at the school in Athens was that they were from wealthy families and were people of independent means for whom archaeology was a passion rather than a profession. I wondered to what degree that was also the case in terms of British people participating in British archaeology—to some extent being amateur, and I don't mean that in a derogatory sense.

BOARDMAN: I think there were a very small number of British archaeologists in the postwar years who were in the business because they liked it, but also had the means to keep themselves going. One, for instance, was Sinclair Hood, who has never had a university post, but he does a lot of lecturing and an enormous amount of excavation. He ran the school for a long time. The other one, more or less close to that category I suppose, is Gerald Cadogan, but he has had long periods of being a professor, in the States in particular. But everyone who was at the school in those days, apart from Sinclair Hood, was there because they had money, scholarships, or studentships from their university to go there. As for the financing of those who went to American School, I simply don't know. They presumably had to find their money either themselves or again from whatever studentships they might have been given, the American School being a basically

privately funded place. To a large degree the British School was then too. It was only a good deal later, in the fifties, that the British Academy took up the responsibility for the school and the Treasury started funding it. It couldn't continue to keep going on subscribers and whatever the students paid for their keep.

SMITH: Did you have a follow-up question from yesterday?

LYONS: No, but is there something else you could say about the position of women in the field or women within British archaeology? I'm interested because we're also working on a biographical study of women in archaeology.

BOARDMAN: There are of course very few women teachers of archaeology in the country. I think there are probably more scattered up and down the country in British archaeology than there are in classical archaeology. That said, the professor of Roman archaeology in Cambridge when I was there was Jocelyn Toynbee, and the professor of Roman archaeology in Oxford now is Margareta Steinby, so it pans out in one way or another. Graduate students here in my time have been more women than men. I don't know quite why; there's a sort of attraction to the subject for them. I think probably that that has been growing largely because the men used to be recruited from the Oxford classicists, and there there was a natural male preponderance because it was in the male public schools that they had been taught their classics and then they came on to Oxford.

That's been rather dying away, mainly I think through disillusion with the idea of an academic life. Why carry on and do a doctorate when you're going to finish up without a job? All the jobs are disappearing. You'd do much better going into computing or merchant banking. This is their attitude. At any rate, a much higher proportion now of our students are not British; they're coming from everywhere else. It's quite common, one sits in a class in a seminar, and you look around and you find you're the only Briton there.

SMITH: I'd like to begin to discuss the excavations that you were involved with, and it would appear the two main ones were Chios and Tocra. Chios was already under way when you arrived at the British School, is that not correct?

BOARDMAN: They had an exploratory season there. This was by Sinclair Hood. I was assistant director, and so one naturally joined the school excavation. Hood was there mainly because there was a very important early Bronze Age site there—which would be quite beyond my period. But there was also a substantial late Roman settlement, and I spent most of the first season working in that, and working on the finds as well. Then, more or less by accident, we found that there was a large archaic Greek site as well, nearby on the opposite hill, and a year after that there was an enormous archaic sanctuary site and votives down by the harbor as well, and I switched away from the late Roman to deal with these. Sinclair was in control of everything, but he more or less left it to me to do the

digging and recording of it, with his wise counsel in the background.

SMITH: Had you any reason to expect that there would be these archaic findings?

BOARDMAN: None whatever.

SMITH: So there were no literary sources to key you in as to what you might look for?

BOARDMAN: Well, the area had been walked over fairly thoroughly by Sinclair and others. They had found a big early Bronze Age site, big late-Roman occupation, and virtually nothing else. I think there's a lesson to be learned from this about survey techniques and how misleading they can be. Living on the site for a year or two, totally unaware that the next field, underneath was stiff with archaic Greek things and a Greek marble temple of the classical period and all the rest of it. A surface survey no doubt done very meticulously would have picked up a little bit of it, but not very much; certainly nothing to suggest that.

The discovery of the town on the opposite hillside was merely a matter of going for a Sunday walk over what looked a very, very unpromising hillside full of burnt trees, and discovering in fact there were walls sticking up in between them. There was a little flat area at the top with walls sticking out of it, which was obviously a little temple which had just been overlooked by people, understandably, because nobody ever went there. It was not cultivable and it

wasn't a short cut to anywhere. I was very pleased of course, because late Roman is all right in its way, but not what I would have chosen to work on, and here one had fine little settlements and temples, and then these rich harbor deposits. Architecture too—bits of an early fifth-century Ionic temple. This I think again fed one's imagination and interest to diversify. It's fun, you know, to start playing with Ionic capitals for a change, trying to fit blocks together, and moving down in period a bit, looking at the town and its houses, and domestic architecture of the early period.

In those days the natural assumption was that you coped with everything that you found. If it was glass or if it was Byzantine coins, the first thing you did was to go back to Athens and try to work out what it was yourself. Only when it came to publication would you perhaps go around to the numismatists and say, "Well, have I got this right?" Or, "I can't quite work out this one." Which is totally different from the style today, where the excavator is a professional organizer of records, plans, and what have you. It's more like running a supermarket, I always think, than being a scholar. The finds are parceled out to the so-called experts, who are usually totally unaware of each other, or of what they are doing. The excavator, who might not even have any great profundity of historical and archaeological experience, is supposed to bring it all together. The result is you get this sort of mishmash publication, spread out over many years,

some of it never appearing, by various experts, and the sensible historical view of all the material evidence together is never there because there's nobody there who's ever had to control it. But that was not true in those days—one did the lot. Not only was this very rewarding, because you never got bored with doing one thing and one thing only, but one could perceive interrelationships and why you had that sort of bronze in the period when you had that sort of pottery. It all helped. So that was extremely rewarding. I like handling objects and there were millions of them, and I like variety. So I thought Chios was very good; it was exactly my sort of thing. I got a lot out of that.

SMITH: How long did it take you to excavate what you felt was most important?

BOARDMAN: That's rather difficult to say. The town site was fairly straightforward because there wasn't very much there, and you just covered all of it that you could, and dug where there looked as though there'd be any promise of finding something of the houses, which generally there wasn't, except the general stratigraphy—you could see more or less how they were built and how they fell down. The harbor deposits we cleared most of, so far as we could see, at least, at the edges of the trenches the important material was beginning to give out. One obviously got a very, very rich selection of what there was there, and there's no necessity to clear a site; one couldn't in this case.

SMITH: In talking to Homer Thompson about the Agora excavation, he said that yard by yard, there might be a literary reference to guide you in what you're doing, and people would have to debate how to interpret the literary versus the material objects. Did you have any literary references?

BOARDMAN: We don't even know the name of the town, so . . . absolutely none, and very few inscriptions. It was very much a matter of interpreting the place in terms of its geography and finds, with no preconceptions. We knew that we were on the island of Chios and that was it, which made it archaeologically more satisfying, and also a bit more of a challenge. In Athens you do know where you are most of the time, and in Chios you don't. You're very much left with your own resources of interpreting what you find.

SMITH: But you could quickly determine that it was in fact a Greek settlement?

BOARDMAN: Oh, there's no great problem about this, no. The material was basically familiar material, but perhaps in different proportions and quantities to what had been found elsewhere. A lot of it was new, but it fitted in. There's a certain predictability about Greek archaeology and Greek artifacts. Even if it's new material and a new shape, it will always fit in with all the rest. There's a sort of homogeneity about Greek artifacts, art, and the rest of it, in all periods, which makes no great problem in this.

SMITH: What about the legal relationships at the time? Were you able to get

the involvement of the Greek government? Chios is in Greece, right?

BOARDMAN: Oh yes. In those days I think it was the same as it is now. Each school was allowed three digging permits, and this was the school's digging permit, to dig in Chios, and it was overseen by the local archaeological authority, who was in fact a schoolmaster who looked after the island. Above him was the *ephor*, who controlled several islands, who would visit from time to time. There was less Greek intervention than there is nowadays in the excavation, but they were there, and of course all our finds were going to them and were stored in the museum in Chios, which was where we had to go to work on them later. But there were no particular problems there.

One sometimes had to buy some land to excavate. This is more the case nowadays, it wasn't then. Most of the land we were digging on was people's fields, and we filled them in at the end, so they just carried on as before, except that we had removed the antiquities from them. The hillside where the town was was simply common land. Nobody owned it. You couldn't do anything with it at any rate, so that was no particular problem. The local village, Pyrgi, provided all the workmen, and a cook, and they were very happy to have extra money coming in, and labor. No, everything went perfectly happily and swimmingly; there were no problems there at all.

SMITH: What were your budgets like at that time? Were they adequate to cover

the needs?

BOARDMAN: That, again, I wasn't intimately concerned with. The school had a certain amount in its normal budget for excavation, but the main source of money for this was the Chians themselves. Philip Argenti, a historian of Chios, was the cultural attaché of Greece in London. He wrote several books on Chios, and he wanted his island explored. He persuaded other rich Chians—it's a big ship-owning place—to put up money. I think most of the money which was spent on the Chios excavations came from the Chians themselves, plus what little the school could offer, and any other sources that might be available for particular projects. Once it was done, then the financial problems became different; it was a matter of getting money to go out to Chios to work on material. I was in Oxford then and one got small grants from odd places and the university to go out. Then the publication was undertaken by the school, and published in such a way that it paid for itself eventually. It's not always quite as easy as that nowadays, but it seemed to work out then.

SMITH: What about the staffing? How large a staff did you have in terms of the excavation, both British and Greek?

BOARDMAN: Well, I should think at any time there might have been forty or fifty Greek workmen, because there were things going on, usually at any time, in three different places, with the early Bronze Age, with the Roman, and with the

archaic. Of the British staff I should think there might have been about ten people to control the work of the digging, which would be done from very early morning to early afternoon. And then in the evenings we worked on the finds, you know, sorting the pottery, that sort of thing.

SMITH: So it was you and Sinclair Hood . . . who were some of the other people who were working there?

BOARDMAN: My wife was there for two of the seasons. Sinclair's future wife was there. A man called Michael Ballance was there, whom I had known in Cambridge, who took over the late-Roman digging from me. There was a man called [Alan] Rowe, who went on to teach in Alexandria and somewhere in the north of Britain; I lost sight of him. There were two or three other graduate students who were interested at the time, and people like that would get their keep, and, if you can call it that, accommodation—it was partly tentage and one or two small holiday houses, which we rented from the locals. There was a fair division of labor. Our architects were Spencer Corbett, a Byzantinist, and Michael Ventris, who had deciphered Linear B. We were the supervisors, and had physically to cope with all the material, whatever it was. A minimal amount of conservation was done at the time. More was done later on in the museum. There was a bit of an early Christian baptistery attached to a basilica which we found, and that was left open and we put a roof on it so that people could see the

layout inside. But really everything else was covered in and filled in. The stuff up on the hill, the archaic town, was left more or less as it was, and you can still wander over it now. It's still overgrown with trees.

SMITH: Sinclair Hood put you in charge of the archaic material?

BOARDMAN: Yes. Part of it was up on the hillside, out of sight and mind for most of the day, and then one moved down by the harbor again, where the archaic deposits were next door to the early Bronze Age deposits, which were next door to the Roman ones, so they were all lined up together.

SMITH: So you were relatively autonomous in terms of how you decided to organize your work?

BOARDMAN: One would always discuss whether it was worth opening up in any direction, and why, and there would be a question of whether the land was available, whether we'd got enough workmen, and whether the flow of finds could be coped with. There was an enormous amount coming out of the ground and one wouldn't go deliberately into something which was going to give us bushels and bushels of pottery when there was an equal amount coming from some other part of the site, which had to be dealt with as well. No, it was all done by negotiation.

SMITH: You've discussed Sinclair Hood a little bit, but could you give us a character portrait of him.

BOARDMAN: He's a devoted archaeologist; a man of independent means. His mother was American. He had dug before the war with [Leonard] Woolley and Kathleen Kenyon, and just after it as well. He knew how to dig properly. He was a good scholar, particularly of the Greek Bronze Age, especially for Crete and Knossos, and I think what led him to Chios was partly the fact that Philip Argenti had the money and desperately wanted people to dig in Chios. He is a very thorough man, a very organized sort of person. He was at the school as assistant director when I was out as a student, at least in my second year, and he became the director when I was out there again as assistant director for a year. He knew how to dig properly, he knew how to publish properly, and he set standards in excavation, which I think I said yesterday, but also standards in publication, which were new, I would say, for archaeology in Greece. Things tended to be done in a rather haphazard way, or with overemphasis on the spectacular, ignoring everything else. I think he was a very good model of the way in which one should do these things—very scrupulous and very fair. He isn't full of hidebound ideas about one thing or another. Everything is based on careful sorting of the evidence. He's still working away on publishing the many excavations which he had undertaken, mainly at Knossos. The Chios ones were got out of the way and published in due course. It took a little while, because he's very thorough. I think he's been a major force in the quality of excavation

and excavation publication—certainly of British archaeology in Greece, and it has rubbed off a great deal on other people about the place as well, other schools.

LYONS: But he's never taught?

BOARDMAN: No. He's a good lecturer, but he doesn't teach. And yet everyone has learnt from him, as it were, by example as much as anything.

SMITH: You were in Chios until 1955. When you left in '55, did you feel that you had wrapped up what you needed to get?

BOARDMAN: That was to be the last major season at any rate, because you don't want a big dig to go on for too long, otherwise everything gets out of control, you can't cope with the material. We seemed to have covered enough large areas or depths of the main deposits in the different places. We knew what was happening in all the main parts of the site, so there didn't seem to be any overwhelming necessity to go on for any more major seasons. We'd got quite enough material to get on with.

SMITH: We'll go on to the Ashmolean later, but while we're talking about the digs, I did want to then compare Chios to Tocra.

BOARDMAN: Yes, Tocra was a different matter. Of course it was in pre-[Muammar] Gaddafi Libya, and the director of antiquities there was an Englishman, a man called [Richard G.] Goodchild. He found reports of bits of Greek pottery being found on the shore at Tocra and went there and put in a big

rescue trench to get this stuff out of the sand. He got John [W.] Hayes, who is a brilliant pottery man from the British School, to have a look at it and sort it out, and he sent back photographs to the school. Goodchild said, "Can't somebody come and organize an excavation here? This ought to be cleared up properly because it's important stuff." The photographs went around the managing committee in London and they looked at them and said, "It looks rather good, doesn't it?"

Although I don't really enjoy the rough and tumble and the hard life of excavation—I prefer a quiet and comfortable life—it did seem that this was material of such quality that it would be wonderful to be involved with it and in it. So I said I would go and run the excavation for as long as it needed to be run. There was no idea of what there was or how much would be involved. I was moved by it partly because the pottery was of the period which I was interested in—mainly seventh- and sixth-century pottery, which is what I had become very much used to—and partly because I was at that time working on *The Greeks Overseas*, which is about the archaeology of the Greek colonies. Here was a colonial site with fine pottery of the earliest period coming out of it, and it seemed appropriate for me to get involved with it physically as well. So I was very happy to do that. I had a very small team of people, never more than about four of us there, with local workmen. Luckily, the basic organization of how

you managed to live—if you can call it life—and work, was managed by Goodchild, who organized the labor from the local village. We had two longish seasons there and one shorter one with just myself and John Hayes working on the pottery.

SMITH: What were the assumptions when you started out about what would be found?

BOARDMAN: Well, the stuff looked of such quality that it was likely to be votive material; it wasn't going to be from habitation. That became perfectly clear once one got there; we began to get inscriptions too which said that. It didn't seem to go very late in date. Most of it was seventh and sixth century; there were only little bits of anything much later there. As one dug through it, which wasn't easy because it was sand—you could put your foot right the way through the material that you were digging at the time—it was clear that we weren't dealing with much in the way of major structures, but really superimposed deposits in the sand behind what had been a seawall. It was that seawall, which had been undermined by the waves eventually and had given way at one point, that started washing all this stuff out on the sand. We cleared the deposit as well as we thought we could. It was beginning to run out at the edges, and we'd done enough.

Life was pretty hard in Tocra in those days. We felt we'd got enough

material. It looked as though we'd cleared that area of deposit behind the sea-wall without ever coming across—except just in one point—an original floor-level of the period when whatever temple there was there had been standing.

Everything above it, or what little there was above it, was in fact late-Roman, Byzantine, and there was not very much of that—the corner of a house. So it was architecturally disappointing, but the levels were very clear indeed, and the quality and quantity of the material made a very ready check on the levels: you could see exactly where one ended and another began. So the stratigraphical information was very clear, and the material was fantastic. It wasn't brilliant, but it was very, very good, there was a lot of it—all ranges of archaic Greek pottery.

It was not quite in John Hayes's period. He'd been dealing more with late Roman things, but he has a feel for pottery, and I love pottery, so between us we had a rare old time. It was the sort of material of which you kept every single scrap and fragment, and I reckon that although there was a lot of material we didn't miss a single join, or a pertinence of one bit of vase going to another bit of vase. It was as complete a treatment of the material as any dig could ever claim to have.

SMITH: You were then somewhat protected from the Libyan . . . well, "protected" might not be right word. You were working under Libyan auspices

but you did not have much interaction—

BOARDMAN: We were working under of the auspices of the director of antiquities in Libya, who was English. He employed the workmen. We had to fend for ourselves to find our food, which wasn't all that easy because the local village at Tobra had n't got anything, and the first season we hadn't got any transport, so one of us would go in on the bus to Benghazi and carry back as much as we could. There was precious little to buy there. Really, you know, they were pretty rough conditions. The British army was still about then. They lent us a couple of tents and a British oil company gave us a big pot of acid so that we could clean the pottery. That was lucky, but otherwise we were pretty isolated, and we were living in tents, mainly, in the first season. In the second major season Goodchild found a little prefab house with three or four rooms, which he dumped down in the corner of the site. It was a very big late Roman, Byzantine site really, and this was just the corner of it, which was where the earliest Greek colony was, and that made life a little bit better. Although it had things like fridges and heaters in it, there was no electricity on the site, so you couldn't use any of them. But it made things a little bit more comfortable, and the main satisfaction was all this stuff to deal with all the time.

SMITH: Did you have any interaction with Libyan archaeologists?

BOARDMAN: There were no Libyan archaeologists in those days. Those that

there were were in Tripoli, at the other end of the country, and not in our end of the country, which was Cyrenaica. There may have been one or two, but Cyrenaica was still mainly run by the Italians, who had been working there of course before the war, and by Goodchild. So there wasn't much interaction that way.

LYONS: What was your working method with John Hayes?

BOARDMAN: I was on the site—again it was a matter of working all through the morning and then having the rest of the day to work on material—and he was back cleaning and mending the pottery. Occasionally there would be one other person with me on the site, but it was very compact, and anybody else there would also be back with the finds, cleaning, labeling, marking the sherds, and then putting them together. It was uncanny how you eventually got to know the vases. You know, here are bits of one coming up and you'd remember two days ago we got another bit of that, didn't we? It all fell together in a most remarkable way.

I made a join in my bed once—one got so absorbed with all this stuff. I woke up in the morning and John Hayes was in a sort of safari bed on the other side of the room, and I said, "Do you remember, we've got a big hydria-looking pot in the corner of the room, and in the other room we've got some funny little pots as well; I think those stick on that [big pot]." And he said, "No. Quite

impossible, how can that happen?" He being more dedicated perhaps than I was, got out of bed and went and actually had a look, and they did [fit]. But that's simply an indication of how absorbed one was with the material; one's brain was going on working on it when you were away from it. Connections were being made without the material in front of you because, in a way, you knew it all, which is why I say I don't reckon we missed a single join in the whole dig.

SMITH: Did the material deliver what you anticipated?

BOARDMAN: We didn't know what to anticipate, but it delivered as much as one could hope for, that is to say a very rich representative range of the pottery which was brought to Tocra and dedicated there in its first hundred and fifty years of life. And this corresponded very well with what one might have expected. There were a few surprises, but they also made good historical sense. One could make historical sense of the site, though admittedly only from the votive material at one sanctuary in it. Where the rest is, goodness only knows. But it made sense in terms of the history of Cyrenaica; the date of the foundation of the colony was a bit earlier than people had thought, but that made good sense too. The sort of material that got there came from places you could explain. The votive material was appropriate to the deities, Demeter and Kore. Local production was fairly easy to identify and make sense of. No, it worked out very nicely.

SMITH: I noted that you also excavated in Knossos?

BOARDMAN: I think that was in the years when I was assistant director.

Things were going on in Knossos all the time, and there was a certain amount of excavation which had to be done—rescue excavation, as it were. There was a tomb or two which had been excavated before the war and this was going to be threatened by more housing, and I did clear the rest of that small cemetery.

Little odd jobs like that, which is what assistant directors are for. And that was very pleasing, but I never got involved with any of the major excavation of the palace itself.

SMITH: Were there distinctions in working on the Cretan material from what you did in Chios?

BOARDMAN: No. A quite different period, style, matter. There's no association at all. The Cretan material in that cemetery was very early in fact, much earlier than anything in Chios.

SMITH: But there was no distinction methodologically in terms of how you—

BOARDMAN: Methodologically only in that what one was digging in Crete were graves, and I had never dug a single grave at all, now I come to think of it, because there were no graves in Chios that we found, and certainly none in Tocra. So that was the main distinction. You'd simply dig a grave in a different way from the way you'd dig a settlement or deposit site. The Cretan workmen

knew more about how to dig graves than any of us. We rather left them to do it.

SMITH: In 1955 you come to the Ashmolean. How did that come about?

BOARDMAN: While I was in Greece a lot of people were coming through, including Tom Dunbabin, who was a reader in classical archaeology here. He thought it would be a good idea if Llewellyn Brown, who was in the museum as assistant keeper, should have a year off and go to Greece, and exchange [his position] with me; that would give me an opportunity to get back to Britain for a year and do other things if need be. That sorted out quite well. I had an informal interview with the keeper of the department in a coffee shop in Athens. I think I mentioned that earlier when I was talking about whether there were gems here or not. So I came to Oxford initially for a year. Sadly, in that time, Dunbabin himself died. After Llewellyn Brown had spent his year in Greece, he was appointed to succeed Dunbabin, so luckily the job in the Ashmolean was empty, and Donald Harden, who was the keeper there, was prepared to keep me on, and so I found I'd got a job after all.

SMITH: And you had made the decision that you'd rather not be in the field?

BOARDMAN: There was no prospect of staying in Greece. They changed around assistant directors every three years or so, and I didn't want to stay in Greece any longer. I wasn't so excited by fieldwork that I wanted to go on digging. I felt that what one worked on from excavations, whether one's own or

other people's, was much more interesting and rewarding than going on spending a great deal of one's time getting more of it out of the ground. I'd rather leave that to other people. Which is why I really only turned to Tocra later on; it was the right sort of site at the right time, and it was really rather enticing.

Otherwise I resisted getting involved in any other major excavation work. The Ashmolean provided on a museum level what excavations did out in the field, as I think I've mentioned: a wide variety of objects which one had to deal with and had to learn about.

SMITH: What were your responsibilities as assistant keeper?

BOARDMAN: In those days it was a very small staff, so I had all the Greek and Roman to deal with, and for a while, I remember, even the medieval, though not very much of that. One had to have some knowledge of the Egyptian because the only other person there who was nominally in charge of the Egyptian was really a British archaeologist and it was a matter of convenience. The keeper himself, Donald Harden, knew a great deal about the Near Eastern and quite a lot about the Egyptian as well. Life wasn't quite as hectic in those days as it is now in museums, but there was a great deal to do. The range was fairly wide.

SMITH: It was a much smaller staff?

BOARDMAN: A very much smaller staff. The staff is three times as big now, with much more circumscribed responsibilities; and no one knows very much

about what their friends are doing. If anyone happens to go on leave, there's nobody there who can cope. Whereas in our day you had to cope, whether you knew what you were talking about or not. There was a famous occasion, on a Saturday afternoon I think, when the governor of Virginia turned up with a party and wanted to be told about Powhatan's mantle—one of these early Indian objects. Very, very strange and quite unique in its way; there's nothing like it in the United States. I knew no more about it than I could read on the label, and even that of course I got wrong, because I assumed that Powhatan was pronounced like Manhattan. [laughter] And so they put me right about that. But that was the sort of thing, you know, you were suddenly having to face—coping with the governor of Virginia and a dozen or so of his friends who had turned up unannounced and wanted to see these prized relics of early colonial days in the States.

SMITH: You also were responsible for the display?

BOARDMAN: Oh yes.

SMITH: So you were what we would call in the U.S. a curator?

BOARDMAN: A window-dresser and layer-out of things, writer of labels—everything.

SMITH: How were things presented in the fifties, when you started there? If you could give us a sense of that.

BOARDMAN: Not that unlike the way they are now, to be perfectly honest, although there was even more of a tendency to show everything you'd got. The main Greek room had virtually all the Greek vases that we had on show, and the bronzes, and a very rich selection of the terra-cottas. I remember I made a special new display of them, putting out as many as I could. But that changed once money was given—mainly by Mrs. Dietrich von Bothmer—to redo that room in a more modern way, with new lighting and new cases, which mean that 80 percent of the vases got suppressed and were put down in what's called the sunken court, where they're available for students but not displayed. But I belonged to the era when you showed everything that you possibly could, and you made it as intelligible as you could by placing it in the right position and making a good label for it. It was rather heavily didactic in that way, but it seemed to be well appreciated, not only by those who wanted to use it to study, but also by the public, who I'm still convinced likes seeing lots of things.

SMITH: What museums are your favorites in terms of the classical material?

BOARDMAN: Well, it depends what one's looking for. The British Museum is overwhelming. I think they've done pretty well, actually, because they're still working on displays which make good sense to a member of the public who's prepared to take a bit of trouble, and then all the rest of the material is accessible for students—certainly the pottery is, and much of the other things, so that most

people are well satisfied. The old Herakleion Museum in Crete managed that pretty well, too, in the same sort of way. There are all the fine things from the palaces and objects fairly richly displayed, and a study collection as well, where you could see the rest, except that they had masses put away in cellars of course. I still feel happier with the Ashmolean Museum than most places for the range and quality of stuff it has got, which is very well balanced, adequately displayed, with a lot of interesting, unusual material as well as a good selection of the better, more predictable stuff. The Louvre I love as a museum, but it's infuriating if you actually want to find something or study anything. Italian museums are always fun to go to when they're open—very rich collections, and some of them very well displayed nowadays. But in all the museums of places like Italy and Greece, and I suppose Turkey too, one is aware of the fact that most of the material is not visible at all and is probably little known even to the curators of the museum. They just can't cope, whereas in the other Western museums most of the material is known about and can be put out. As for American museums, the Metropolitan has suffered for a long time by giving the impression that the only Greek material they had were vases; that's changing now, with Carlos [Picon] bringing up everything else. There were enormously rich collections there, in the basement and not loved for too long. The Boston [Museum of Fine Arts] I like. There's something about Boston which appeals.

There's a lot there, adequately shown. The only thing I dislike about many American museums is that the light isn't bright enough. That goes for hotel rooms too. [laughter]

SMITH: Which are the museums you like the least—in terms of major museums?

BOARDMAN: I can't think of any examples in the Greek area, but there's a tendency for some major museums to feel that their obligation is to an only rather vaguely interested public that has to be entertained.

[Tape III, Side Two]

BOARDMAN: Their obligation is to see that the play rooms and the teaching rooms are available and they've got a good cafeteria and that their wonderful display, which is under glass, which you can never move or get into, is there for people to look at if they feel like it. I've come across that not so much with Greek museums, but I've been looking more at Eastern art, Indian art, and time and again I found I would go into a place and it's, "Well, next year we're going to have a special display of it, but just at present it's all in store." Or you'd go to one where they've got a very small, very finely displayed collection of what they think people would like to look at, and the rest of it you just can't get at. In this I feel museums are not doing their job properly. They're trying to be amusement parks, and they're not giving proper due to the range of material that

they've got, which they ought to be making available for the public to admire and learn from. If they're strong in one area they should demonstrate their strength in that area. If they're weak they shouldn't fill up the weakness with photographs and casts and things; they should just ignore it and show what they've got. I don't know what the motivation for this is, I suppose it's civic interest very often, they want to bring in the public, and they seem to be doing something educational, making money.

SMITH: How have you gone about balancing academic needs with public needs?

BOARDMAN: Personally, I was only involved while I was assistant keeper for four years. Then one just went on doing what everyone had always done, one tried to show as much as one had got, make sense of it, and answer the questions from the public and the scholars when they came up with queries about it. I think the general principle has been maintained in the Ashmolean ever since, except when there is a donation and a whole gallery is reshaped and material has to be suppressed in one way or another. But they've kept going pretty well; they show the public what they've got. There are no major collections totally hidden away, though that's beginning a bit now. There's no real display of terra-cottas for instance now, and the bronzes. It's in a terrible mess just at present at any rate because of all this rebuilding.

SMITH: But as a faculty person who relies on the Ashmolean—

BOARDMAN: As a teacher one relies on the Ashmolean and one hopes that the students will realize that they've got a collection in the same building as the library and lecture room which they're attending. Some classes are held in the galleries, or with objects which are taken from the galleries, so that they can look at them and handle them as much as is necessary. There are no undergraduate courses in Greek art and archaeology, but there are individual optional papers within the classics degree, though they don't bulk very large. There would be no point in making an enormous fuss of that for undergraduates. But when they have lectures and the opportunity, then they are taken and shown some vases and allowed to touch them, and they've got the Cast Gallery here for the sculpture. It's the graduates who are more likely to make personal hands-on use of the material, and that they are allowed to do perfectly freely by the museum staff. All they've got to do is to go up and ask, "Can I look over all the bronzes?" They give them the key and open the drawers and they get on with it. So that seems to work quite well.

SMITH: What about questions of layering the time periods—organizing the different periods of material and their relationship to each other—for display?

BOARDMAN: Here it used to be done totally by material really, and all the pots were together. There is some improvement now, although one has lost a lot of material out of sight, but you get a mix of materials. The gems and the bronzes

and the terra-cottas are displayed alongside the pottery, more by period. There is a progression through the rooms, from the earlier to the later. That I think is true of all the antiquity displays, except perhaps the Near Eastern one, where it's more geographical and has to be because it's such a wide geographical area covered. The Minoan one's done chronologically as well I think. The rest of the museum of course operates in different ways. Western art and Eastern art.

SMITH: In 1959 you move from the museum to become a reader. What was the progression involved with that? Was that something that you were hoping would develop?

BOARDMAN: Yes, but I enjoyed working in a museum enormously. This was unfortunate, again, to have been helped, in a way, by other people's misfortunes. Llewellyn Brown died of leukemia, so the readership came up, but I was very happy to do that and I'd enjoyed working in the museum. A new keeper had come, Robert Hamilton, who was a very organized, excavational sort of person who had worked in Jordan. I felt I'd have more time perhaps to get on with the things I wanted to do if I was a teacher rather than a museum curator. Probably a very large motivating force was that the salary was appreciably greater and with a growing family one needed the cash. But I wouldn't have done it only for that. And I knew I would still be in the museum, because I was teaching in the museum, and the library's in the museum. There wouldn't be that much change,

so I was very happy to make that move.

SMITH: What kind of classes did you then organize? How did you organize your teaching responsibilities?

BOARDMAN: Well, Ashmole was the professor then. He wasn't in Oxford for very long as a professor because it was towards the end of his career and [he was] near retirement. They wanted him to succeed Beazley, and they reckoned that it wasn't quite time yet for Martin Robertson to get the chair. There was a certain amount of fuss wondering whether Dietrich von Bothmer was going to get it and they didn't want Dietrich, so they bullied Ashmole into taking the chair.

The undergraduate courses were very straightforward ones. They were on sculpture, and Ashmole was a big sculpture man, so I didn't have very much to contribute there. I put on a few courses of things that happened to interest me, in archaic Greek art—just lecture courses. Oddly enough, it was only with Ashmole and never under Beazley that a paper on Greek vases was introduced. You'd have thought that Beazley would have done that but he never did. Ashmole and I concocted this paper on Greek vases, which became very popular indeed, so I gave all the lectures for that as well, and a few others which were deliberately aimed at the ancient historians, who one reckoned always ought to learn a bit of archaeology. So there were a number of courses of lectures which were on archaeology for the ancient historian, and related matters, like colonization and

the rest.

When Ashmole left, Martin Robertson came as the professor, and the split-up, if you like, of the vases and the sculpture lectures was more easily arranged. We just swapped around from time to time according to interest—a certain amount more, I suppose, for historians. The graduate community was beginning to grow quite rapidly then, and a lot of time was being spent teaching people doing masters degrees or doctorates. These weren't on the whole done by classes and seminars, because you didn't get quite enough people doing the same subject at the same time, so this was more individual teaching. So one spent much more of one's time simply sitting and talking to people, and this was very rewarding, very nice.

Gradually the faculty became a little bit more aware of the fact of classical archaeology being about the place and eventually got to the point of adding papers on classical archaeology within the undergraduate course, so that throughout their course they could be taking at least one paper in archaeology, and that has snowballed as time has passed. We've got to the point now at which they can do really a great deal of archaeology during their undergraduate course, and indeed half of the last part of their course in Greats can be virtually classical archaeology. So that has gradually grown over the years and of course provided a lot of demand for more undergraduate teaching, which is mainly done by us, by

lecturing. There is not very much tutorial one-to-one teaching in archaeology for undergraduates, but at the same time, many, many more graduates have been coming, so there has been much more to do in that. Quite apart from the business of university administration and committee work and the rest, which has grown out of all proportion in the last ten, twenty years, thanks to various governments. No, thanks to one government. [laughter]

SMITH: Perhaps you could talk a little bit about the class on vases, since you've written so much about that—how you organize that class and the kinds of changes you may have made in it.

BOARDMAN: I haven't made many. I've tended to do it in a strictly chronological manner. There'll be the introductory remarks—this is where we start and this is where we go on, and as it was different material in different periods, one would concentrate more on shape or function or decoration or whatever it might be. Not a great deal on the content of decoration. Later, I started having quite separate lectures about iconography and Greek myth in art. They became separated from the historical presentation of the vases, which is more or less the way in which I was presenting them in the handbooks too. One always writes these handbooks in the hope that you can stop giving lectures on the subject, but it never works out that way. So they were done in a fairly straight, historical manner, and from time to time vases would be brought out for

them to look at and handle, and we would spend a little session in the gallery. A few years ago we decided we were giving them too many lectures, because Oxford [students] have a bad habit of not going to lectures. You know, they go to lectures for half the term. So all right, if they only come for half the term, we'll only lecture for half the term. This seemed to work, in a way.

We also thought we ought to have more general background lectures. Instead of letting that information dribble out in the course of the historical series, we had separate lectures on things like trade and shape and function. That seemed to be all right in its way, but we had to abandon them because of the loss of the lecture room, and we reverted to the old system of just doing it chronologically. I gather now from my colleague, Donna [C.] Kurtz, who has cross-examined some of the undergraduates who had been to the same course the year before, that they preferred the old system. They said that it was distracting in a way. The chronological sequence was quite a complicated one to follow, and to have a lecture thrown in the middle about trade and distribution and things didn't help. They'd much rather pick that up either themselves or elsewhere. What they really wanted was to be taken, visually, through. You know, looking with somebody at the screen, and if possible sometimes at the object. That they picked up. So it looks as though innovations in teaching do not always represent useful progress.

SMITH: What was the balance of formalist and sociological components in your classes? Or stylistic and social?

BOARDMAN: It was heavily, heavily stylistic, and in the other lectures, which were on iconography, heavily based, not so much on text, but on simply going through, subject by subject. There I would have sequences of groups of lectures on hobby horses of my own about political imagery in archaic Greek art, and then imperialist imagery in fifth-century art, that sort of thing. But it was presented very much in a more empirical way; it's no good worrying about what this means in terms of trade and distribution and society until you know what the stuff is. Our main effort with undergraduates, doing many, many other things as well, is that they should have a very clear idea about what is the evidence. They are told en route how it can be used historically and its reflection on society and its reflection on myth, but that is not the main thrust of it. They are introduced to the material. If they want to take it further, and later in their course, or as graduates, then it becomes a different matter.

SMITH: Aside from your own books, what were the texts that proved to be the most important, that you would recommend to the students or assign to the students?

BOARDMAN: Well, for the vase painting it was mainly a matter of getting them to Robert Cook's book on Greek painted pottery, and then a fairly broad

selection of articles, very often by people like Beazley, where they could come to closer grips perhaps with the personality of a particular painter or a particular period and understand how they were put together and what made them hang together. And for the iconographic ones, studies of particular scenes, where one thought that the author had done a good job of not only commanding the material but also explaining it and seeing its relevance or non-relevance to texts or plays or politics or society or whatever it might be.

SMITH: While you were working on a particular book, would you then focus your undergraduate classes around it?

BOARDMAN: Not undergraduate ones, no. The undergraduate lectures were to get through a particular exam, which took a particular form, and they only had the equivalent of, say, one term's work to do on it in the course of their four years. That would have been a bit of an indulgence; in fact, it wouldn't have helped them. But it has a great impact on what one does with graduates, when you are just sitting and talking to them. What you are working on inevitably spills out, and it very often turns out to be in some vague way relevant to what they happen to be doing. Not because one has directed them into a relevant subject, but because all these subjects in some way interrelate to each other, and there's always a spin-off.

SMITH: Perhaps we could talk a little bit about the seminars that you would

offer.

BOARDMAN: Well, seminars as such don't happen. There are what are called seminars, many of them in Oxford, but they merely tend to be a series of lectures by different people on what seems to be a more or less common theme, with a certain amount of discussion by graduates afterwards. Very often graduates like to run them themselves and not have too many senior members about the place. For the graduate community, as I say, the teaching's really done one to one. They will run their own little seminars and talk to each other, and we will sometimes attend if we think it would be fun and they'd quite like us to be there.

We did have quite a successful series for a while, which only broke up because of physical reasons as much as anything, where they gathered here in the Cast Gallery, downstairs, and one had an extremely informal presentation of a paper by one of them or by one of us, and a general discussion developed. I thought that the strength of them was that they were so informal, and we very carefully kept out other people. Ancient historians would come around the place and say, "What are these seminars you have? Wouldn't we like to go to them?" They would be told, "No, they're for us; these are for Greek archaeologists. We don't advertise them." We reckoned that we were then dealing with a group of people who knew each other very well already. There were no heavies around the place, no other people who they hadn't much seen before, who were doing

other subjects. So they were totally uninhibited; they could make fools of themselves without worrying. I think that was good; that worked pretty well. We only gave up because we got more and more Greek archaeologists and there wasn't really room for them down there, so they go on now in a classroom in the Institute of Archaeology, and as a result they have become just a little bit more formal. I think the innocence has been lost.

SMITH: In talking to people I know here, and certainly Francis [Haskell] emphasized this, [I hear] that the nature of education at Oxford has changed radically in the last thirty years.

BOARDMAN: Yes. What's he thinking of, do you think?

SMITH: Well, the type of students that were here, and the decrease in importance of lectures versus the seminar method.

BOARDMAN: Yes. I think a seminar method is used very much more now in the big subjects, in undergraduate teaching as well. In Francis's own subject, which is relatively small, with not very many [students], I suppose he would have put on seminars on things that he was working on because they were of a sufficiently general interest and would be within a period which the graduates would be probably studying—they were much more focused. We have always found that a bit more difficult because people usually come to us with an idea of what they want to do. They may come to us rather than anybody else because

they know that we're interested, but it does result in an enormous diversity of subjects being studied, and there aren't many of them working sufficiently closely in similar fields to make it very profitable to sit down to talk to them in groups. Occasionally, when you know they are similar, you have two or three students in together to go over something—"Go and read this and we'll come and talk about it for an hour." But nothing more organized than that. I'm not quite sure whether that's a weakness or not.

I've often thought perhaps we ought to do more in this way, but there never seemed to be the time, and one suspected quite strongly that there wasn't the interest either. They quite liked it the way it was. They had instant access to any of us whenever they wanted. They just had to walk in and sit down and talk, and if you're not free you told them to go away and come back in half an hour, but they could always come. We were always here and the library was there and we were in and out of the library, so supervision was almost continuous supervision rather than one hour a week or one hour a fortnight in which you came with a set topic and you talked about that and then you went away and you forgot about it for another fortnight. I think, in a way, this has been more effective. You can keep track of what they're doing much better. You begin to notice whether they've been in the library for the last two or three weeks, and isn't it about time they produced some written work for you, and this sort of

thing. It's very informal, rather loose, and I suspect it's beginning to be less effective because there are too many of them about and you can lose track. But I think they quite like it; they feel they are more independent. They are working out their own way of doing research, and we are simply here to guide and push from time to time.

SMITH: You started teaching in '59, and the sixties was a period of theoretical shifting in many fields. I was wondering if you began to notice [at that time] a diversification in the topics that people are coming to you with.

BOARDMAN: No, if you're thinking of the "new archaeology," this was something which grabbed Cambridge very heavily because of Colin Renfrew there. It was not ignored in Oxford, but we didn't allow it to impede or get in the way of what we still thought was our basic function of teaching people what their primary evidence was before they started worrying about how it should be applied and approached in various theoretical ways. And then it was a matter of individual choice about whatever subject you were dealing with for a doctorate or whatever it might be.

This is where the differences between the British and the American system come in. A large part of a doctoral course in the States is a taught course with classes and with seminars. Well, that's not true here. You start on your doctorate and that's it. You don't have a couple of years doing classwork in

particular periods and subjects, where the seminar is obviously the ideal way of putting over the information. You just launch straight in. You are expected to have picked up what you need in other corners, or you are directed to go and pick it up for yourself in one way or another. I think both systems have their weaknesses.

Ours is modified a bit now by outside pressure to have at least the first year, in its way, taught—something like a moderate master's degree in which you do a particular period. And then that would be like the other master's degrees and you are taught mainly one to one, because still there aren't that many people, and there's still a degree of specialization in it—being archaic or classical or Hellenistic. But that's one of the reasons why there aren't big graduate seminars going on all the time. There's no big group of graduates who know that at the end of this year, before they get on to their doctoral subject, they are going to have to pass exams or get grades.

SMITH: Did people come to you with subjects, or did you direct them?

BOARDMAN: Normally they come with their own subjects. They say they're interested in such and such, and you say, "There's no point in that, somebody's been doing it. Go away and think of something else." You may give them a few suggestions of things which are not unlike what they had in their own minds. Very, very rarely have I actually put a subject into somebody's mind that had

never been there before. Sometimes that has been because it is a subject which has been in my mind for a long time. I reckon I'll never probably do anything with it, but it would be worth doing something with. It's a good subject, and I would enjoy seeing somebody else doing it. These have been the best [topics], perfectly honestly, because they are subjects which I know are good subjects and which I would love to have had the time to be able to do. If I judge they are the right sort of person to do it, I put them in their way. Generally, they come with their own idea: I want to study pottery, I want to study art-historical aspects of style, I want to study period, whatever it might be. One tries to find something within that interest which will accommodate and which will make a thesis which will be within their compass, depending on how clever they are, how diligent they are likely to be—that sort of thing.

SMITH: Perhaps we could talk about some of the students you have had over the course of the years.

BOARDMAN: My first one is now a professor in Cambridge, Anthony [M.] Snodgrass. He was an ancient historian, basically. I frankly think he still is, but he wanted to do arms and early Greek armor. He was very, very clever. He hardly needed any direction at all, and the only input I had was to make him stop and look a little more closely sometimes, because he had never done much with archaeological or art-historical things. Although he was handling objects and

representations, he wasn't as rigorous as he should have been. He still isn't [careful enough], I'm afraid, in looking and seeing that what he is talking about is really what he thinks he's talking about. But he was dead easy. It was more a matter of restraining him from handing the thesis in too soon. I said, "No, let it stew for a bit longer. Give it another six months before handing it in."

Others have been good ancient historians who turned to archaeological subjects with a historical bent. They were very rewarding; people like Paul Cartledge, who did Sparta, and John [B.] Salmon, who did Corinth. They've all got good jobs in Britain now. They were very worthwhile. It was quite fun then teaching a very clever ancient historian how to get into archaeology and how to get out of it what they needed for various studies.

Lots of Greeks come, usually with very clear ideas about what they want to do, like Anna Lemos, who wanted to do the pottery of Chios because she was a Chian. She knew I had worked there. I had collected a mass of material on it, which I was happy to hand over to her because I knew I would never do any more with it. She did a very good workmanlike study of the subject—not desperately profound, but it will stand for the next generation as the thing one turns to.

A Swiss girl, Véronique Dasen, who had worked with the rather wilder Swiss, Bérard, in Lausanne, wanted to work on dwarfs in antiquity. She was

very good, and she produced her book *Dwarfs in Ancient Egypt and Greece*. She turned herself into an Egyptologist, and together with the Egyptologists here she sorted out all the iconographic, pathological material on the subject. That was enormous fun. Quite difficult to keep up with at times, but one learned so much from all these people, and one's own contribution is not so much experience in the material that they are handling but in the way of handling it.

One can do quite a lot of the lateral thinking for them—if that's so, well what about so-and-so?—which might not have occurred to them, not because one knew it, but because one gets used to looking at things sideways rather than front on. The result is very exciting then, and things move quite rapidly and quickly and you feel that the end product is something that nobody would have thought of doing quite that way before, and that you've helped something to be done. One feels as proud of the book as whoever wrote it—this has now been sorted out, we know what happens in this area, we know what we can and can't say about it.

LYONS: Do students come wanting to take a certain theoretical perspective?

BOARDMAN: Very rarely. It's strange this; they don't very often. I think probably if they wanted to they would have gone to Cambridge. They come here because they know more or less what we do and what our interests are, so to that extent we dictate things, but not consciously. Nobody would come here and say, "I want to do a postprocessual study of the late Iron Age in the Argolid," or

something like that, because they know I wouldn't be particularly excited about teaching them, and they know there are plenty of people in Cambridge who would. So we duck out of it.

The students all get into it; it's quite a common subject in their own seminars. Again, I suppose they are in a way preselected by coming here. They are very hardheaded. I am impressed by their judgment. One thinks they could be easily led astray by these various things, but they are very sharp indeed—with each other and with whoever's talking to them—about things they don't think are quite as rigorous as they ought to be. If one has had any influence at all, it is to make them think of all the possibilities and not be led down paths which a theory might direct them into but which the evidence might not.

There was quite a good case recently, a Greek girl. On her own, she had come across certain works which were not irrelevant to what she was studying, and she had worried her way through them. She came with the Xeroxes of them smothered with yellow and green and blue and said, "I can't make head or tail of this. The author seems to be contradicting him or herself on every other page. There seems to be no logical flow in this. The motivation seems to be not to find the truth, but to make a point. What have I got to do with this?" I was very glad she found all that out for herself without me telling her not to worry about it because it wasn't going to help her. It's not avoided, and I think the good in it is

used all the time, but they are not brainwashed by it.

LYONS: Do you notice differences in the perspectives of, for example, American students as opposed to Greek or French?

BOARDMAN: I'm not aware that American students are more prone to this sort of thing. They've been differently trained. They've got usually a wider range of academic skills, at not a very deep level, but many of them turn out to be extremely valuable; they did something or other in biology and it turns out to be extremely useful. Whereas many of our [students] gave up biology at the age of twelve, or something like that, and didn't do any more. I haven't been aware of many of them being motivated in other than a general desire to find out what went on in antiquity and what made it tick.

SMITH: Just a little while ago you made a distinction between archaeology and ancient history, and I wonder if you could elaborate that a little bit.

BOARDMAN: Ancient history in Oxford terms means dealing with texts and inscriptions. There was a famous and notorious dictum—I can never get the words right—by an ancient historian, who said that the only serious study in classics is the reconstruction of antiquity from its texts, and he regarded [concern with] material evidence as being just a sort of frivolous byline. There have been distinguished professors of Roman history here who have written big books, which one would have thought would be absolutely full of archaeological

evidence, and they said, "I'm ignoring all archaeological evidence in this book. I don't regard it as a necessarily relevant thing to deal with." That's ancient history. There was a long tradition in Oxford for doing it in that way. It's disappeared now. The ancient historians are very much more relaxed people, and they are all of them to some degree or other, archaeologists. There's a certain danger that they think they are better archaeologists than they really are, which leads to some rather silly mistakes, but there's much more rapport between the two.

Just as I regard archaeology as subsuming art history, so I suppose one should say that ancient history subsumes archaeology and art history. I think we're all really ancient historians. The archaeologist is more concerned with the material evidence than the texts, but cannot ignore them, and the ancient historian, the pure one as it were, is more concerned with the text but can't avoid the archaeology. And once you get into the archaeology you can't avoid the art history.

SMITH: I'd like to get a sense of the intellectual community that you have had here at Oxford, the people with whom you intersected most frequently, to share ideas and so forth.

BOARDMAN: This is odd, really. There was very little. There may be corners in some faculties where there is intense intellectual activity and discussion going

on, but I'm not aware of it in the classical faculty and certainly not in archaeology. There may be a bit with some of the prehistoric archaeologists, but I'm not sure. The image of Oxford as a place of people excitedly discussing the infinite with each other all the time is I think a total mirage. If it exists anywhere I've never come across it. You go to dine on high table with the intellects of the day, and they're all talking about a television program, or where they send their kids to school. [laughter] It's strange, this. People do tend to work in little compartments, and one of the weaknesses of Oxford is that it's perfectly possible to have a feeling of self-sufficiency, you know, you don't need to talk to all these other people. Somebody can be working on the other side of Oxford on something that's very close to what you're working on yourself, and you never discover it until the book's published five years later.

This is a weakness, obviously, and it's based on a certain unjustified feeling of moral and intellectual superiority. We know it all, we can sort it all out for ourselves, we don't need to talk to other people about it. Which is why I think there have been no—at least I'm not aware of any—strong intellectual movements developing in Oxford since the war in the way that they did in Cambridge. We never had a [F. R.] Leavis-ite phase in English literature. Odd individuals may do odd things, but there was no great wave of interest going in one direction or another.

In archaeology it's always been fairly empirical or field-based because the other archaeologists here have always been excavating archaeologists: Ian Richmond, Sheppard Frere, and Barry Cunliffe are all excavators, and although what they produce is of considerable historical value, they don't find their work and have never found their work dictated by the feeling that now we're going to do this in a processual way or a poststructural way, or any other theoretical way.

It's disappointing that one has to say this but it's true, and I think partly too that, from my own early upbringing, where I had been very largely self-educated, I haven't worried particularly about the lack of discussion. It has been a pity not to be able to talk to somebody about aspects of one's work, and it's a pity not to be able to talk to somebody who knows those aspects in considerable detail and is very close to it. One finds odd people here and there who can do this, but not usually in classics. One finds more dedicated interest in particular topics one is working on, not really in Britain at all, but with colleagues in France or in Germany or in the States. Really interesting conversations, which make one begin to think again about what one's doing, or why you're doing it, don't generate here.

It is odd. On the other hand it may be healthy in its way. Things spin off each other. You go into college and you don't sit and talk to a classicist, you sit and talk to a chemist, or a computer expert, or whoever it might be. You talk

sometimes about a bit of your work, or aspects of your work, and they show an interest, or you show an interest [in their work]. You feel more aware of the intellectual or academic life of the rest of the university while you conduct your own in a fairly personal or restricted way. Maybe that's a weakness, maybe we should have more teamwork. I suspect that in some faculties, long, earnest discussions go on late at night. I'm sure it does among the undergraduates and graduates, yes, but not on the whole among the senior members.

SMITH: What usefulness do you think the new theory has had? I know you've largely been critical of it, but do you think there are areas that one can pick out from it and salvage?

BOARDMAN: Well, I think the "new archaeology," insofar as it was rather mathematically based, has been very useful. I have a natural sympathy for anything that's mathematical, like putting things in order and working out the percentages and all the rest of it, but I think it was being uncritically applied in very many cases. When I see a chart or a map or plan, any of these things, I don't look at what the apparent results are; I immediately want to know, where did you get the information to make that figure as large as it is? Has it been properly controlled? Is this a true reflection of the evidence that we've got? You usually find that it is only just, or not quite, or there's something really quite faulty about it, and that a false appearance of almost scientific truth is very

misleading indeed, because the right questions haven't been asked before the figures have been compiled and put together.

There are some classic examples. There's one scholar who sorted out the sources of objects found in Greek sanctuaries, whether they came from north Greece, Phoenicia, Africa, Egypt, or other parts of Greece, or made at home, that sort of thing, and produced charts. Perachora had an enormous area which was all Phoenician. And one thought, "Well, it's remarkable. I can't really quite remember Perachora being as Phoenician as this." One first asks the question, What do you mean by Phoenician? and you very often find it's not Phoenician at all but just conventionally called Phoenician. Then you find it's because in a thoroughly detached way the scholar had decided that one shouldn't make judgments about one object being more important than another; one item is one item. That enormous group was because there were 290 scarabs. So it was 290 items. Well, those 290 scarabs could all have been put onto half a dozen necklaces and been one object. If you had called it one object, a handful of scarabs, it would have been one. If you decide it's 290, it's 290. And that was not admitted anywhere. You had to work that out for yourself and follow the references to find out how this extraordinary number was produced. And that is the sort of thing which happens time and time and time again. The rather spurious appearance of something which is arrived at scientifically and

dispassionately and objectively is really quite misleading.

Other approaches have been mainly devised by the prehistorian, who has no text-based history to provide a framework of his work. And this doesn't impinge very much on the work of the classical archaeologist, who has got heavily text-based history. You don't have to believe the text. I think more and more, as one gets older, one believes a Greek text less and less. You have to ask yourself why whoever it was said that rather than believe what he's saying. But that doesn't matter, it's there, you know; it's something to work on. And I think it's the lack of this which has prompted the prehistorian more and more to try to work out some sort of theoretical background which will provide a framework or skeleton, which later periods have got from their knowledge of texts and other sources. But it's interesting, one reads it, and occasionally it puts in one's mind the sort of question which perhaps we ought to have been asking and we haven't asked.

Cambridge has done a great deal of this through Renfrew and it's crept into classical archaeology there too. They go through great phases of being pre-processual, processual, postprocessual, cognitive. They can't even work out what they mean by some of their own words. They've spent a lot of time writing about this. If you had spent a great deal of time on one of these theoretical phases twenty years ago, it would have been totally wasted because by now it has

moved on to something totally different. One suspected from the beginning, you know, that they are spending a lot of time on something which is not going to help at all and are neglecting the evidence that is available, which can, if you treat it properly, in an imaginative way, ask all the right questions which you've really got to answer and which you *can* answer.

[Tape IV, Side One]

LYONS: There seems to me to be a return to the material specificity of sites in some of [Ian] Hodder's work.

BOARDMAN: Hodder I quite admire. I've read his work and got more out of it than most. But I think, as I said yesterday, I read these sorts of things, and what is useful in them sticks in my mind, the rest disappears, and I reckon that it's not going to help me in any way at all. But they are aware of this themselves. They begin to think about this now and say so. What have we produced as a result of this? How have we forwarded knowledge and the understanding of antiquity? And they haven't; they've merely been exploring their own egos very often, or are led into paths by other disciplines, which they notice and pick up the jargon of and usually abuse, I reckon. One feels there was an enormous amount of high intellectual effort which has been spoilt and wasted.

It's all useful, or it can be useful, but I still feel deep down that one's got a great deal of primary evidence, text evidence, material evidence, which, if you

look at it as an experienced archaeologist with a fairly wide range of interests, will begin to ask its own questions. These are the questions that you've got a hope of answering, and you should get on and answer them. You'll very soon find that you are in the territory of other people who are wondering about the society and the history of the day. You've got the answers because you've found the evidence and it's asked the questions which you can find the answers to. In trying to sort out your evidence, getting it in the right order, getting the right dates, understanding what it really amounts to, what its function is, you are producing work which will be useful for other people, whether they have the same sort of political or social [ideas], whether they are Marxists, or whatever they might be, it's still going to be of value to them because you have worked on primary evidence, asked the right questions of it, and got it in the right state for them to use.

With the Oxford series of publications, we always try to [cover] all you need to know about [the subject] for the next generation, whatever it might be. You don't publish a book in that series unless you've got a pretty fair idea that for the next twenty or thirty years this is going to be the standard work on the subject. The other schools are producing works which are interesting essays on various aspects of things, you read them, and they are nine-day wonders, on the whole, because the next one, which is going to be the same thing in a slightly

different way, comes out with a rather different result, and that then gets forgotten too. They make no cumulative effect on one's views on antiquity, which is sad.

But I've got a lot out of reading Hodder's books. I didn't get much out of reading Colin Renfrew's *The Emergence of Civilisation*. This was in the days when the idea was that diffusion was a bad thing, and that all civilizations and cultures were really self-generating. They generated their own movement forward by one aspect of their life or society interacting with another, and this generated things without diffusion of interests, people, trade or whatever it is, from the outside. And that became a sort of dogma, so you began to write your archaeology with this supposition. Renfrew did this for the Greek Bronze Age. Well, you can do it for that, in a way, because you can't prove that it's wrong, but it's presented as a model for the interpretation of other periods and cultures, and anyone who knows post-Bronze Age Greece knows that it can't possibly work there. We know it doesn't work there because we've got very, very clear evidence—archaeological, textual, and the rest—that it didn't, and that diffusion was absolutely important. When I wrote that book on diffusion [*The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity*], the word wasn't deliberately put in, saying, "Look, diffusion happens," but in a way, it's a reflection. In a way, too, that whole attitude has disappeared from archaeology by now. People are much more

interested in seeing how different cultures interact and affect each other, rather than trying to prove, as Renfrew was, that you sit back and things'll happen to you without the help of others.

LYONS: How much has the work of French structuralists looking at vase images, such as [Marcel] Detienne, affected your point of view?

BOARDMAN: It has more, in a way. Not a lot in the work that's written, because again I don't think it's rigorous enough. It makes images say things which I know they don't say, because I know more about the background and what the whole range of them looks like. A lot of it early on was much too driven by purely textual preoccupations. [J. P.] Vernant's a very brilliant man, but he never has and never will understand Greek art and how art can be a message of various things, so that he's led quite a lot of people astray. But there are two or three people in the French school who are very, very good archaeologists, as well as being absorbed with this type of interest. [François] Lissarrague, who's here now in Oxford, giving a lecture or two, is very good at that. He's a first-rate archaeologist. He knows his material inside out, but he looks at groups of the material and tries to explain it not in structuralist terms, but with the questions and interests which they have generated. I think it's very profitable and I have been led to do a certain amount of it myself as a result. No, I admire the French school very much, but I think there are some rather wild

cards in odd corners of it, and structuralism as such they've more or less given up themselves. They don't pretend to be, in the strict sense of the term, structuralist, or whatever poststructuralism is—I've never quite worked it out.

SMITH: Before we move into discussing some of your publications, I wanted to ask you how deeply you get involved in career placement for your students? Do you help them find jobs?

BOARDMAN: I spend a great deal of my time writing references for them to try to find jobs, and I respond to those who are looking for people to fill jobs with information which I can offer about the careers or prospects of people I've taught. There is a lot of that going on all the time. The fact that a majority of my pupils now are non-British means that one has rather less impact. There are very few jobs in classical archaeology in Britain. I suppose in the British Museum department the keeper is partly my pupil, and two of the other ones are pupils of mine; they are nicely placed. John [A. J. N. W.] Prag, in the Manchester Museum, is a pupil of mine. I think probably all of the British students I have had have finished up in academic posts of one sort or another in museums or universities. They were very good. The other students . . . it's more difficult to be of any influence and help. You know, you simply respond to the references, you try to write the sort of reference which you think is going to be both honest and helpful. But it is a big preoccupation, quite certainly.

SMITH: You've maintained your involvement with the British School in Athens. How did the British School intersect with your teaching?

BOARDMAN: Not a great deal. Except that if people were studying things which required them to know a bit about Greece and things in Greece, I would of course naturally encourage them to go there. On the whole I have not encouraged [this] a great deal, because I know that it is very difficult indeed to work in Greece nowadays. I'm afraid some Greek archaeologists and Greek museums are generally uncooperative with foreign students, and I have never, in many, many years encouraged anyone to work on any material which depends on seeing things in Greek museums. The only exceptions I've had to this are one or two Greeks, who told me, "Yes, I know I can get at that material. I know so-and-so." But more than once that has turned out not to be the case.

If people want to deal with objects and things in museums, I have tended to direct them more onto subjects like Cyprus or Italy, or even Turkey, where they are likely to get better received and get at the material. It's very difficult in Greece, so to that extent I haven't been feeding that many people into the British School. Where I can, I do, because I reckon what you get out of the British School, as much as anything, is not necessarily the work you do on your thesis, but a base with a good library from which you can see Greece and you can see Greek museums and move around, which is more or less what I did when I was

out there. I was in Greece for two years, and most of my time was not spent studying the pottery of Eretria but looking at Greece and what was available in the country. Few students want to do that now; they haven't got time. Time and money will not allow them simply to spend six months looking at Greece. It's only an occasional student [who can do this]. I've got an American student now, Jo Tyler Smith, who's in Greece. She felt it would be nice to spend two terms there. She can get on with her thesis pretty well while she's out there. There's a good library, and she doesn't depend on the Greek museum. She went to the British School, and that was a proper way of using the School.

The British School started in recent years having summer courses where they take groups of undergraduates—and some graduates can join in—on tours around Greece and Greek sites. It's the sort of thing the American School does on a regular basis; it's one of its main [features] for people who come over for long periods of time. The [British School] tours are shorter, and they've proved quite successful. I've always encouraged any undergraduate or young graduate to go on one of these as the quickest and easiest way of looking at the major sites of Greece. Though of course nowadays it's not too difficult to do this on your own with a backpack and the buses and whatever's available.

LYONS: Do you have much contact with the [British] School in Rome?

BOARDMAN: Very little. I've stayed there once or twice. Their interests tend

to be rather different. My people go and stay there of course if they're working in Sicily or Etruria or something like that.

SMITH: I wanted to discuss some of your books. I wonder if you've given much thought to the distinction between writing excavation reports and writing narratives for a broader audience.

BOARDMAN: There is a difference, yes. I don't know whether I've given it much thought, but I'm aware whether I'm writing an excavation report or I'm writing for a student or a general audience. An excavation report is an excavation report; you are setting out the facts in as clear a way as possible and trying to be unambiguous. That's not exactly a mechanical process because it can be done very badly, but it's fairly easy to understand what the principles are. Writing in a more general way—I've always thought that one has a certain obligation to spend a certain amount of one's time in this. If you're a scholar who has the privilege of doing a job that you thoroughly enjoy, and have this privilege because the taxpayer has allowed you to, you ought to pay it back in some way or another. A portion of any scholar's time should be spent trying to explain to the people who are paying you why you are doing it, what you get out of it, and what they might get out of it. And the rest of the time you spend on trying to make your material, as you understand it, available to other scholars. Therefore I've always spent a lot of time just simply writing catalogs and making

typologies of things, because I can do this, I enjoy doing it, and this is going to make it easier for other people to go on and do the same thing. The rest of the time you go chasing good, bad, indifferent, ideas, seeing what happens to them. You are pushing back the frontiers of knowledge, or in fact turning people inside out, or whatever it might be. But each of these aspects are ones which scholars, who have the privilege of doing what they want to do, ought to address, and if you can convey your interest in the subject to people who can themselves derive some interest from it, one ought to; one has a certain obligation to do it. If you can't do it, you don't do it, but if you can, you do.

I think the first time I felt I could do that was with *Greek Art*. I had done a chapter on Greek art for a big Birth of Western Civilization book; you know, you have a chapter on the philosophers and the rest, and a chapter on Greek art. I did that in a fairly dry way. As I say, I was still not that experienced in Greek art, but rather in Greek archaeology. It was a Thames and Hudson book, and they said, "Why don't you make a whole paperback of that subject? Just turn it into a 250-pager with pictures, instead of thirty pages?" I did that, it was great fun, and I learnt about Greek art while I was writing it. I think it worked *because*, as I think I may have said yesterday, I was learning the subject as I was writing it, and I was trying to explain it to people in the same terms as I was beginning to understand it myself. There were areas which were better than

others. I think Eve Harrison said the Hellenistic chapter was suavely chaotic, and it probably was, because I didn't know much about Hellenistic art. But I don't think I misled anyone.

I enjoyed this. It came reasonably easy, and I think it still does. In those days of course one wrote by hand, and my manuscripts were a fair mess by the time I had finished with them and decided I was going to type anything out. With the wonders of the computer world everything can get rewritten twenty times within five minutes of being put down on paper the first time, and this I do all the time, with a conscious effort very often to make things as simple as possible. I find I tend to cut down to shorter sentences, if possible.

SMITH: A book like *Greek Art*, or *Art and Architecture of Ancient Greece*, which seems an elaboration or an extension—

BOARDMAN: No, the *Art and Architecture of Ancient Greece* was a collaborative book done with three Germans, and the only bit I contributed was on architecture, of all things, because they hadn't got anybody to do the architecture. It was a time when Thames and Hudson was being very nice to me, doing all my gem books, and they said, "Well, can't you just write a chapter on architecture for us?" So I wrote this rather dry chapter on architecture. I was doing it not as a committed architect, but as somebody who was writing about architecture for people who wanted to know about Greek art and architecture in

general. What had always seemed to me the interesting thing about Greek architecture was not the number of columns in the temple, or the ground plan, but the architectural decoration. The orders and the decoration have survived to the present day in the way that the ground plans haven't. So half of it was architectural decoration and the other half was the buildings. I enjoyed doing that, that was quite fun. But I didn't want to do it; I'd never have chosen to do it. But that was a quite different sort of exercise. The *Greek Art* book was just one statement—this is what Greek art is about—for a general public who I reckoned would be prepared to have quite a lot of detail and not too much fantasy, which I wasn't very good at.

SMITH: It's a synthesis then; I mean, it's based on your reading of—

BOARDMAN: It was based on my reading, and various prejudices I might have picked up in one place or another, [though] one tries to damp them down.

Looking at it again, because I was thinking of doing a revision, I was quite pleased by the fact that the reaction then, when I didn't know that much about the subject, seemed to me to be a fairly favorable one. Probably because I wasn't being too ambitious.

SMITH: Well, you don't have a major argument to advance through the book.

BOARDMAN: No, there's no preaching going on, and each period and product is treated as far as I could on its own merits. I've never really thought much of

these feelings that Greek art or Greek architecture was striving towards—whatever it might be. No Greek artist strove towards anything except making enough to live on. He was driven by his past, but he wasn't aiming for a goal. He edged his way forward. There was progress, there was movement, there was change, sometimes slow change, sometimes almost in a reverse direction. There were outside forces which acted on him very often to make him move in one direction rather than another, and a few dramatic periods, the motivation for which isn't always that easy to understand, which turned Greek artists in radically different directions and are very influential.

But the idea that they were driven by some force which wanted them to do one particular thing, I don't think was there. It's illogical: at any rate how can you? This is what's wrong with Gisela Richter's kouroi: how can you get up in the morning and say, "Well, I'm going to make my ear a little bit more realistic today. It mustn't be too realistic, because we've got another fifty years before we get a totally realistic ear." You can't do that. You vary what you're doing and what survives is what is most successful, whatever successful means—fulfilling its function best. And that catches on. So you go on doing it. You may improve on it one way or another. You do it a different way and that seems to work, so people copy it. It's natural selection, almost. Then at some point you realize what you're moving towards is something which is totally

realistic. Then the penny drops: "Yes, that's what we're doing. My goodness, we're counterfeiting life!"

So they did it. Nobody else had reached that point in antiquity, for a very good reason; very often because it's a bit of a dead end. They did it, but there was no feeling of, "This is what we're striving for. In another generation we'll be there." That's crazy. But that's the way very many Greek art books are written—with hindsight of that sort, as though it was a deliberate movement—it couldn't possibly have been. It's much more interesting then, and this is where the archaeologist comes in, to see why there was that shift, why did things go this way rather than that way? You only find that out by looking at things very closely indeed, and you find sometimes it's something technical which shifts you in one direction rather than another, or a change of material, a change of scale, a change of function; you're doing it for a different purpose. It edges forward, edges towards something quite different.

SMITH: You published five books on gems between 1963 and 1970. How did you get onto the subject of gems as something that you wanted to be—

BOARDMAN: Well, I think I mentioned that yesterday—coming across Furtwängler's book in Athens and then coming to Oxford, finding a gem collection here, and then Mr. Dawkins's brother bringing his sack full of island gems. I started working on them and then worked on from early archaic gems to

later archaic ones, a couple of private collections, and the big gem book which Thames and Hudson encouraged me to make. I think I covered that yesterday reasonably well. That's what got me on to them and it's left me with them, too, very largely.

SMITH: *Greek Burial Customs* you published in '71, with Donna Kurtz.

BOARDMAN: That was because, again, Thames and Hudson was doing this series and they wanted one on Greek and Roman burial customs, which I wasn't interested in doing. So they split them and Jocelyn Toynbee did the Roman ones, and I didn't really want to do all the Greek ones, but it was quite interesting because this was archaeology applied, as it were. Not only applied, but it was putting together information which hadn't been put together in quite this way before and was very disparate and spread all over the place. I thought it would be quite fun to chase around all these reports and see what common factors there were and try not so much to explain but to demonstrate to people what was done. It's very much a descriptive book, but of an area which hadn't been put together archaeologically before, rather than an explanatory book about Greek motivation and what they thought about death. Quite a bit of it comes into it in various places, but that wasn't the object of the exercise initially. Donna Kurtz had just finished doing her thesis on white-ground lekythoi—funeral vases—in Athens, and since Athens evidence was a major part of it, the easiest

thing to do was for her to do all the Athenian part of it and I'd do the rest of the Greek world, which interested me rather more. So that was a case where a subject was suggested to me and I could see both the need for it and that it would be quite fun doing it.

SMITH: Actually, I skipped over an earlier book from 1964—*The Greeks Overseas*.

BOARDMAN: Yes, that was more important. When I came to Oxford, the material from Al Mina, a site in Syria which had a lot of early Greek material in it, had been shared out; Oxford had received its share. I pulled open a drawer and there were some bits of pottery which were obviously the sort of pottery that I had been studying in Eretria, which was rather a surprise because they hadn't been mentioned or illustrated before. The publication had been very summary and rather selective; it didn't happen to pick on these pieces. From that I began to wonder if there was any more which could be from Eretria or Euboea, and I found quite a lot that was. I thought, "If this is so, there's a major class which was found in this Syrian place, which people had vaguely said were from the Greek islands. Couldn't this be from Euboea too?" There was no evidence for it in Euboea, a few scraps, but in terms of history and geography it made good sense that it should be [there]. On the assumption that it was, it would have made excellent historical sense of the presence of all this pottery in Syria coming

from a part of Greece which we know was in the forefront of the colonizing in the west. They'd also been in the forefront of exploration and contact and trade in the east. I put all this together—Euboean pottery and history—and published it.

It was while I was doing that that Max Mallowan, who was the editor of the Penguin series on archaeology, phoned up and said, "We'd like you to do a Penguin book on the archaeology of Greek colonies." I said I would only do it if it included trading posts like Al Mina in Syria, because I'd been working on that, and Naucratis, in Egypt, where, again, it's not a colony but it's Greeks in a foreign place, as traders. Mallowan didn't seem to mind very much and he said all right. It was about the time too when I was going to Tocra, so it all fitted together rather nicely that one was studying archaeological evidence of Greek trading posts and Greek colonies. That is the background to why *The Greeks Overseas* was the way it was. It was a series of happy accidents again.

There was an excellent library here; I would have got nowhere without it. One was looking at all sorts of different things in different places in the Near East and Egypt and the Black Sea and Spain and everywhere else, seeing things that looked alike or didn't look alike and putting it all together—lots of areas which people had covered before, but piecemeal, in different places. It was a bit frustrating having to do it for Penguin, without any footnotes, and I cheated a lot

by having lots and lots of line drawings, putting five in one figure and pretending that was only one figure. [laughter] But they didn't seem to mind too much. One was writing not quite for a general public, but more or less, and it was a mass of information. I've always found it rather too compressed; there's too much thrown in, but people didn't seem to mind too much. And that did quite well.

SMITH: In 1967 you write *Pre-Classical*.

BOARDMAN: Yes, that was Hugh Honour and John Fleming. They were doing a series on Style and Civilization for Pelican Books and they asked me to do it. There was going to be a classical volume as well, which never got written. They asked [T. B. L.] Webster to do it and [Cornelius] Vermeule to do it, and I don't think they ever got it done. I thought this would be quite a useful way of putting out, in slightly greater length, views and demonstration of what archaic Greek art was like. They wanted me to put the Bronze Age in as well, which I wasn't very excited about, but I did, because I had been working on the Bronze Age a bit, mainly through the gems. I did it because they asked me to do it and because they were going to pay me quite well, and in those days that was quite important. Again, one got paid very, very badly indeed in universities in those days, in the fifties and sixties, and we had kids going to school. I got a prize from the British Academy for the Euboean pottery and history article, with which

we bought our first refrigerator. [laughter] This was one of the motivating forces in all this.

SMITH: Did you have much interaction with the people at *Burlington Magazine*?

BOARDMAN: No. I did an article or two for them, which seemed appropriate to go there, and they send me the odd review. I've not personally known many of them.

SMITH: So it was not part of your regular intellectual set of connections?

BOARDMAN: No. Most publication I was doing then was in the *Annual of the British School at Athens*, with occasional ones in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* or other foreign periodicals. The books were almost all Thames and Hudson or Penguin.

SMITH: How did the Thames and Hudson connection originate?

BOARDMAN: From being asked to do a chapter in their Birth of Western Civilization book on Greek art, and then them asking me to do the book on Greek art, and once being with them I thought I'd see whether they would be interested in doing a gem catalog, which the owner was prepared to put up some money for, so they did that.

SMITH: Did they ask you to do that chapter because you were the Reader in Classical Archaeology?

BOARDMAN: No, I've no idea why. I can't remember. Perhaps there were

two or three others who refused.

SMITH: In 1971 you edited the festschrift for C. F. C. Hawkes.

BOARDMAN: Hawkes was the first professor of European archaeology here—a quite brilliant man—very, very difficult indeed. In all committee meetings we seemed always to be at loggerheads for one reason or another, and I learnt that the way you got your way was to keep quiet. So I always got my way. He went in for long, long speeches; he was a very articulate man and a wonderful speaker. So although we didn't get on very well, we nevertheless liked each other quite a bit, and although by the time it came near to his retirement and for getting a festschrift out it seemed rather odd that I should be the one in Oxford who was one of the editors, it seemed to me to be a perfectly natural thing to do and I was quite happy to do it. It gave me the opportunity to write something which was, again, in a field which I hadn't looked at before, which was semi-European in fact, about Situle, and that was quite fun. I'm a great admirer of his. He died only a few years ago.

SMITH: Have you had much regular involvement, even if it's on a minor level, with northern European archaeology?

BOARDMAN: No. I've looked at it, naturally, for *The Greeks Overseas*, but nothing closer than that. When I had the opportunity I'd go to the right museums and look at the right things, but not otherwise.

SMITH: So you don't get involved in things like Stonehenge preservation?

BOARDMAN: No. Stonehenge. They shouldn't have built it so near the road.

[laughter] No, I've never been much grabbed by British archaeology. I can't explain, really. Its historical interest hasn't excited me in the way that Greece's did. I think if I hadn't been a Greek archaeologist I would have been a Greek something else. I wouldn't have been an archaeologist at all. I'd have studied lyric poetry or something like that.

SMITH: Then of course there are your three books on vases. Actually, there are more than three.

BOARDMAN: Well, there were three vase books and two sculpture books. There's a third [sculpture book] coming quite shortly, on the fourth-century. I talked a bit about Winter's *Kunstgeschichte in Bildern* yesterday—the idea of having a series of books with plenty of pictures and a short descriptive narrative text for students. It was a way of getting myself into areas of this subject, because I only knew them fairly piecemeal before. That was again good old Thames and Hudson. I went to them saying I thought it would be a good idea if there were a series of books like this, and I gave them a prospectus. The first one was going to be on earlier archaic [vases]. They thought that looked a bit dull, not an easy one to start with. "What if you just did black figure, which is coherent and quite pretty; it might be worth it." Then the thought was, "What do

you do with a book like this, with so many pictures? It's going to be quite expensive." They took the risk, saying, "Let's not make it expensive, let's make it very cheap indeed, and put it in the World of Art series." Which is otherwise books about Dalí or impressionists, which sit on all the book stands and in W. H. Smiths, and people just buy them because they are there. They are really cheap. The first ones were out for £4.95; they're only £6.95 or something like that now. If they had done them as real books, they'd have been three or four times as much. Well, it seemed to work, and although I don't think it's ever made them a lot of money, or me a lot of money, they have been happy to keep them going.

I'm still in two minds whether it would be worth doing one for the Geometric and earlier archaic vases or not. When it came to Hellenistic sculpture, it would have been quite chaotic for me to do it so I persuaded Bert [R. R. R.] Smith, who is my successor, to do that. I couldn't face south Italian vases, so I got [Arthur] Dale Trendall to do that one in the same style. So, gradually, they have built up these handbooks at very moderate cost. It would never have happened in that way if they hadn't had the courage to say, "Let's see." And the sales have been good enough for them never to lose money on them.

SMITH: They're nicely illustrated.

BOARDMAN: Nicely illustrated, nothing overlavish, no color except on the

cover. They work very well. I tried to keep a balance through them, that they weren't, again, trying to preach in any particular way. I enjoyed doing them, even the earlier volumes, which I did more from a sense of duty. The later, classical, red-figure one I didn't really like very much, but there needed to be a volume on it, so I did it, and I learnt a lot from doing it.

SMITH: How much time do you spend selecting your images for those kinds of books?

BOARDMAN: One learns from experience where to get them and who to turn to and one accumulates quite a lot oneself. Particularly in later years, one learns how much one can do simply by having fast film and a steady hand.

SMITH: Some authors I know will largely try to turn that over entirely either to a graduate student or to the publisher.

BOARDMAN: It always goes wrong. The only time I've ever done that was with putting together the pictures for the *Oxford History of Classical Art*, which Oxford University Press did. I got them to get all the pictures. It was absolute chaos. If I had done it all myself it would have taken up less of my time and none of their time. [laughter] No, I always do it myself. You know what you're getting then, and you get exactly what you want. It doesn't take all that long. You have a bad day or two when you just sit at the typewriter writing letters to people, but then it's all done.

SMITH: Where would you place the books on the Athenian vases and sculpture in the context of scholarship on those two subjects? The vases of course are something that you worked on intensively. Sculpture, you've said, was something that—

BOARDMAN: Sculpture less intensively, but I did more, particularly while I was writing. I had become more interested in classical sculpture by the time I was writing it because I had been working on the Parthenon sculptures and things like this. I became much more engaged with it, but not engaged [in the same way as] the professional sculpture scholars, who tend to be, I won't say narrow, but as circumscribed in their interests as numismatists very often tend to be. I had never reached the point, as I was saying yesterday, of looking at a piece of sculpture and knowing exactly what I ought to be asking about it, so the books tended to be a good deal more matter-of-fact. They quite deliberately shied away from what most sculpture studies have been in the past: the attempt to attribute pieces to the hand of or style of Praxiteles or Phidias. I tried to avoid as much of that as possible, and kept to the names of the people [to whom] you knew you could attribute this copy or original. The rest were done more typologically. That makes it much more likely to last, because it doesn't depend on your or anybody else's judgment of what you think the style of Phidias is.

When you get down to the detail of it, you find any given classical-

looking statue has probably been attributed by one scholar or another to about three or four different names. This offended me; this was not serious scientific archaeology, this was just a sort of pseudo-aesthetic guesswork, so I cut it out. The pieces are there, but they are pieces which look like this, and appear to be of such and such a date and identity, and they are not attached to a particular style or name, since we don't know what the style or name is. This was a strength, in a way, because it meant that if a student or teacher felt this was Phidias, they could go on and say so. I'm not denying it, I'm not calling it something different, I'm just saying we don't know, and this I think helped in that book. It means that in some areas these are the only books which have produced a narrative description of what seemed to be going on, particularly in vase painting. Nobody had bothered to sit down and do it before. Beazley had it in his head no doubt, but he never actually wrote it out. The sculpture people have, but they've done it with a focus: the work of Praxiteles, the work of the early fourth century, the work of whatever it is, rather than trying to write it all out at the same level right the way through.

SMITH: Beazley had written his work on black-figure vases.

BOARDMAN: Yes, they were a series of lectures in California; they were quite brilliant. They were a narrative, but not quite, because they too had focuses. He wasn't trying to explain the whole sequence, which he had already covered

himself. He got it all in his own mind but he'd never written it out, which is what I did and then filled in the gaps and left out the intuitive, if you like, descriptions and thoughts that he had.

SMITH: I glance over there and I see you have a book on Athenian black-figure vases. How does your work relate to work that's done in other countries?

BOARDMAN: It wasn't done in other countries. The only country that's produced recent textbooks on vase painting has been Britain, hasn't it? Mary Hamilton Swindler back in the 1920s in the U.S.A., and in Germany Ernst Pfuhl and Andreas Rumpf, long ago.

SMITH: But [Ernst] Buschor wrote extensively on that [subject].

BOARDMAN: Buschor's book is very Buschor. Himmelmann will tell you all about Buschor. He was a very great archaeologist and art historian—a bit of a mystic, very difficult. Not all Germans understand quite what he was saying, and his book on Greek vases is very personal. He belonged to the period when no German scholar could start an article or a book without extensive quotations from Goethe or Winckelmann. This was the spirit in which the whole thing was done, which is all right in its way, but it's not terribly useful for the student.

But this is why the World of Art books have been fairly readily translated. The only financial profit I get from these books is from the German translations, because they do them in hardback, and with better paper, and there they are more

expensive, so you get a bit of a royalty, and Germans being far more intellectually aware than the English-speaking world, they buy them. The Greeks do them now because they haven't got anything else in Greek to use. The French are always very reluctant to translate anything from any other language and even they are beginning to translate them now.

SMITH: Okay. The Oxford histories. How did you get drawn into those?

BOARDMAN: *The Oxford History of the Classical World*. I was a delegate of the Oxford Press at that time, and the publisher said he felt that we'd got all this talent around in Oxford who know all about classical antiquity, there's probably a greater concentration here than anywhere else in the world, so why isn't there an Oxford history of the classical world? I was the classical delegate at the time and so he talked to me about it. I recruited Oswyn Murray and Jasper Griffin to cover the history and literature and we sat down and found twenty-five or so mainly Oxford people to cover the whole thing. One or two were too haughty and dismissive and said they couldn't do that sort of thing, and the two that I am thinking of regretted it. They said they wished they had joined in, because it worked; it worked incredibly.

[Tape IV, Side Two]

BOARDMAN: I was in Australia, and a woman said, "I bought a copy of that for my husband." The woman saying it wasn't a classicist. Her husband was an

engineer, but she thought he'd like it and he did. It proved to Oxford that Oxford academics, who only talk to themselves most of the time, can in fact write in a way that the general public can respond to. It also shows that the general public can rise to work which is done at a fairly high level of intensity. You shoot just above their heads and they'll catch it. This was a real surprise; it worked very well indeed.

SMITH: So then it led to the book on classical art [*The Oxford History of Classical Art*]?

BOARDMAN: Yes, it did. The first book, the classical world one, they split in two; then they turned it into a paperback without pictures, or with only a handful of pictures, because they said people will just read the text, even if they haven't got the pictures. The pictures were quite important in the *History of the Classical World* because they had nice captions, and people always said it was good to have these pictures. You read the caption so that you know all about it, and you don't have to worry too much about the rest of the text; you read it in a different way.

I thought of doing the classical art book mainly because I felt that there was a market for it. I wanted to keep the Roman with the Greek, and I felt that it should be done very much in terms of making people look at objects, and teaching them about the art while they were looking at the pictures of the objects. So each chapter was a matter of selecting a good representative selection of

pictures, which would be written about in a fairly relaxed way and would bring in other related information. It wouldn't be just about that pot but this would be the text as it were for both that pot and for other related matters. In that way, by having people looking at the thing, one could painlessly learn more about the art in general. At the beginning of each chapter you deal with other aspects: style, background, history, patronage and what have you. That way they get the best of both worlds.

It seems to have worked reasonably well. Each author had more or less their own view. I tried to prescribe as much as possible what they ought to put where, and for the most part it seems to have worked. I think it probably worked as well as one could expect it to. It is still basically fairly descriptive, and people who no longer like descriptive accounts of art which are based on objects don't approve of it very much. I threw in a bit at the end on the diffusion of classical art, because I was beginning to get interested in it in that way, which was a bit different. It was deliberately trying to be something a little bit different from most of the history of art books in that it was very much threaded onto images. There had been others roughly like that. [George M. A.] Hanfmann's book on Roman art is a bit like that, but there, each essay on each piece was rather devoted to that piece; it didn't attempt more.

The plates for volumes in the Cambridge Ancient History [series], which I

edit, were redone so that there was a little essay on each illustration rather than having just an illustration which referred to another volume of the book. I had influenced them to do this; one should have the word and the image in one's eye at the same time.

SMITH: Could you talk a little bit about the difference between working with a commercial publisher like Thames and Hudson and a university press?

BOARDMAN: I have been very lucky with Thames and Hudson. I've got a commercial publisher who is friendly, wants to do things the way I would like to have them done, and will only occasionally dig in or object or make a suggestion, which is usually a very good one. I find that relationship an ideal one; it couldn't have been better. Oxford University Press is more commercially minded than commercial publishers. They are much more likely to make a fuss about the expense of having too many pictures. I've not always much enjoyed working for a university press, and I only have done that for Oxford, and for the Cambridge Histories.

I did [enjoy it] way, way back. There was a book which we seem to have forgotten about: *The Cretan Collection in Oxford* [: *The Dictaeon Cave and Iron Age Crete*] which I was writing mainly when I was in the museum department. The new keeper, Hamilton, had devised a card index system for the collection, so I wrote up card indexes for all the Cretan collection and I thought, "Why not

publish the post-Minoan Cretan collection," which was a big and good one. One could tie onto that a general study of archaic Crete, which was novel and nobody had done it quite that way for a long time. So I did, and that was published by Oxford University Press. In those days the Press was a much more relaxed sort of place. One had a nice relationship with the editor and with the printer, and everything went absolutely swimmingly, but those days have passed. The Press now is in the business of making very, very large sums of money. I would not go out of my way again to work with a university press. Possibly with Cambridge; they are quietly old-fashioned in their approach. They do publish some rather funny things, but if I do another book I think I would send it their way. There's more variety now, other publishers: Routledge, Duckworth, and the rest; they do these things very well now.

SMITH: But of course much of your publishing also has been with the British School at Athens.

BOARDMAN: Well, that's where the dig reports go, in their supplementary series. I edited that for about twenty-five years, all the dig reports which were coming out between 1960 and about five years ago. I was managing and editing the other volumes of Chios and Knossos and other things.

SMITH: And your articles?

BOARDMAN: The articles. One thinks of something, so you write an article

about it; it begins to coalesce. There are lots of unfinished articles where you eventually decide, "Well, perhaps that wasn't such a good idea after all," and you forget about it.

SMITH: Perhaps the difference being that at Thames and Hudson the projects are driven by the success of previous books.

BOARDMAN: In a way, yes, but the Greek gem book [*Greek Gems and Finger Rings: Early Bronze Age to Late Classical*], which looks like a coffee-table book, is a very heavy piece of scholarship. There are thousands of footnotes at the end of it—not actually laid out as footnotes, but they serve as footnotes. They are very good at dressing things up, provided they are written in a way which many people can cope with, which I think they can. They are perfectly prepared to take very hard academic material. If Oxford University Press had done that they would never have given me that many pictures, but the text would have been exactly the same.

SMITH: I suppose what I wanted to get at was the question of how your interests and scholarship have moved over the years, the way you've moved from subject to subject. What were some of the motivating factors, other than people coming and asking you to do something?

BOARDMAN: In one's early career one's tendency when one is asked to do something is to say yes. It's only after a certain while you begin to realize what

you should start doing is say no, unless there are very good reasons for not doing so; in other words, unless you really wanted to do it, and it hadn't occurred to you before, and you would get a kick out of it. I think, as you probably picked up from what I've said already, many of the things I've done have happened by accident. I did Eretrian vases because those were the only ones I could do. *The Greeks Overseas* included trading posts and Al Mina because I happened to see in Oxford the pottery which was related to it. Gems because Mr. Dawkins came in with a sack full of gems and it struck a spark. I felt perhaps this was what I'd always wanted to do so I did it. Architecture: I felt I ought to learn a bit more about architecture, and this would be a way of doing that.

It's very largely been a series of happy accidents. Maybe other opportunities have turned up along the way which I've forgotten about and which I turned down or turned away from because I wasn't responding to them, but I can't offhand think what. I have turned down suggestions for doing various books, popular ones, serious ones. I've turned down suggestions of joining particular research projects of one sort or another. The biggest project I didn't turn down was the *Iconographical Lexicon*. Otherwise it's been very largely a series of opportunities which have not been of my making, but which I decided were worth following up.

LYONS: Was *Diffusion* based on the Washington lectures?

BOARDMAN: I was writing *Diffusion* more or less in that form, when Hank [Henry A.] Millon said, "Come and do the Mellon Lectures." I'd already asked Thames and Hudson if they would publish this, and they said they wouldn't mind. Then I found that in fact they had been publishing the Mellon Lectures with Princeton already. So it fell [together] quite happily. They kept the book, but it was a Mellon Lecture book instead of a Thames and Hudson book. Part of that arose from *Greeks Overseas*, because I had become interested in Greeks and Europe, Greeks and Egypt, Greeks and the Near East and the Black Sea. But I was more motivated by the East and India. And that was again pure accident. The British Academy set up a British Institute of Archaeology in Afghanistan, in Kabul, in the seventies. The first chairman of it, Peter Fraser, who is a Hellenistic historian interested in that area, said he had all these easterners and people interested in that area on his committee, and he wanted somebody he could talk to about Greek things. So he asked me to join the committee, to have somebody else who was an archaeologist and classicist. I didn't see why not—this was in the years, presumably, when I was still saying "yes" to most things, so I joined it.

After a few years they got an excavation going in Kandahar. I couldn't contribute very much, except giving Peter someone to talk to. He said, "Well, we think we ought to have a little trip there, three or four of us, to see how the

excavation is getting on and how things are doing. Come." So I went. Not many years before the Russians got there, I had this incredible tour around Afghanistan: Kabul, Kandahar—museums and the rest. Sitting in the gardens of the institute, which used to be the British hospital at the British Embassy in Kabul, I read books they had there on Parthian art. In the Kabul Museum one began to notice that things looked really terribly Greek.

I can't remember how I got interested in sea monsters. I did a lecture on sea monsters somewhere in the States. I had noticed that the Greek sea monster type, which had been used for Jonah's whale and various other things, had traveled east to India and affected some of the local iconography of sea monsters there. And everything else all around one in Afghanistan seemed to be proclaiming the same sort of general message. When I got back [to England] I started investigating this a bit more and I thought, "My goodness, this is an exciting subject." A lot had been written about it, more from the eastern end or a long time ago, and more with the intention, like Mortimer Wheeler, of proving that it was the Romans who did everything there and not the Greeks. The French excavations of a big Greek site in Afghanistan knocked that on the head in very many ways.

I thought what fun it would be to explore this a bit more, and in a rather desultory way I went on doing it. There's a very good library here for eastern

art, where one could pursue it, and then the idea came to do a book in the *Greeks Overseas* manner, which dealt with the diffusion of Greek art in the eastern world. As one went on with that, I thought, "Why only that? Why not the rest?" Because it's the same art which is traveling; it sometimes ends up different and sometimes ends up exactly the same in the most incredible way. You know, Coptic art can look like Indian and Celtic art can look like Chinese and this sort of thing. The other chapters were easier to write, because one knew enough about Etruscans. It didn't take long to learn about what was necessary of the Phoenicians. It took a little bit longer with some of the Egyptian [material].

The eastern material I got more and more involved with. All the things other than the eastern I had had physical relationships with through the museum. But luckily then, people here had realized what I was interested in. They were devising in fact that exhibition, *The Crossroads of Asia*, in Cambridge, on Gandhara as a crossroad town where Greek art and nomad art and all the rest comes together. They asked me to join in with it, and the collector, Neil Kreitman, much of whose collection was included, was particularly interested in picking up this sort of material—smallish objects, bronzes, jewelry and the like. So at last I had the physical material to have to look at, because I don't think I could have done it simply from photographs. Once you've got an object which you have to describe and understand, which nobody had worked on before, you

learn about it, and you learn about what's involved in doing it, and that gave me the confidence to feel that I could cope with this type of material, although it was so foreign.

SMITH: In Hugo Buchthal's work on Gandhara he argues vehemently that it's Roman influence, and there appears to be a very large body of literature on this argument between Greek and Roman influences and timing and so forth and whether it's military or commercial. You must have had very complicated, rather technical decisions that you had to make.

BOARDMAN: It was complicated. It was helpful, in a way, that I wasn't particularly biased in one way or another. The old view at the beginning of the century that really it was pretty well all Greek, was very much attacked by Mortimer Wheeler, who found all the Roman material in India, but most of it was in south India, not in north India. And then that got reversed by the French finding a big Hellenistic city with pure Greek things sitting in Afghanistan. There was a big balance of interests going on. I found the more I looked at it that, yes, a lot of it was of the Roman period, but it depends what you mean by Roman and what you mean by Greek, because what there was of the Roman period did not come from Italy; it came from Greece. One has to realize that Hellenistic Greece didn't stop with the foundation of the Roman Empire; it went on, and the Greek art of Asia Minor, and Greece of the first, second, and third

century, A.D., was still Greek art. It was here and there affected by Roman interests, mainly in architecture, the theaters and such, but basically, still, this was a continuation of Greek art. What was going into the east was *that* art, and not the art of the central Mediterranean.

People will quite glibly say, "Here's a sarcophagus in Rome and here's a similar relief in Gandhara; that's Roman art." But you find that the details of the scene on that sarcophagus, the cupids holding the swags, are details which are only current in that period in the Greek east and not in Rome at all. It was the art of Alexandria and Asia Minor, Syria—Greek art of that area—done by Greeks with Greek letters, Greek inscriptions and the rest, which was going off into India and being observed and copied and adjusted there. So they were both right; it is art of the Roman period and it is very much inspired by Roman interest in trade and wanting to get the spices, but what is being carried, and the carriers, and what is being influential, is of the sub-Hellenistic east Greek world. They're all right. It's silly to say it's either one or the other. It's not, it's both.

SMITH: When you are writing, how important is it to have an argument that you are making?

BOARDMAN: I think the argument almost comes afterwards. When I was doing that study I had a body of material and I tried to lay it out as I was doing with the gems: is there anything else like this? Here are a number of silver

dishes; this is the way they relate to each other, this is the sort of subject they have on them, this is what they look like, this is how they seem to relate to the Greek world. Then one sits back and says, "Well, what does it mean? Does this mean that a foreigner came and made them or that they were just looking at things and misunderstanding them?" The argument, the results, the conclusions if you like, emerge from looking at the material in that way. I think that way one is more likely to have got somewhere close to not necessarily the truth but at least something that most people could agree with.

I always found that I naturally had a pattern of swings of opinion where one moment I was thinking, like Buchthal, that everything was really terribly Roman. One could interpret all this sculpture in terms of the development of Roman sculpture. Then you sit back and [realize] that because you can date Roman sculpture and you can't date the Indian, you can put it wherever you like and make it look right, and that doesn't make sense. Then you begin to look rather closely at what Buchthal was saying and some of the things that he's showing, and you find that some of them are pure Greek Hellenistic, which must have emerged from Alexandria; they couldn't have emerged from anywhere else. I have yet to see a figure in Indian art which is wearing anything like a toga. They are all wearing versions of Greek dress and not togas. If you ever get any inscriptions on any of the works of art there of the relevant period, they are

Greek, they are not Latin. Coinage is influential because coinage is what you're dispersing around the world; it's what you use, but there are virtually no Roman coins in north India, which is where all this is happening; they are all in the south, where the spices come from. So it was a matter of being a bit of an archaeologist before being either the art historian or cultural historian, and seeing what the evidence really amounted to. Are these cupids with swags Roman ones, or are they in fact Alexandrian ones?

SMITH: How important is the issue of quality for assessing work? It's a big issue in art history.

BOARDMAN: As an archaeologist one should only be interested in quality in terms of antiquity—you know, what was regarded as quality work then and was therefore perhaps influential. But very often things get about not because of their high quality but because they were cheap, or because they served a purpose.

Some of the most prestigious and important works of the classical world of the turn of era—massive cameos, for instance—didn't travel a great deal. I think some did, but you don't find a massive production of cameos in India as a result of this. You do get massive production of silverware, but they had been making silverware for millennia. That was nothing new to them; they were just adapting what they had already been doing. They were picking and choosing, which is I think the main message which I began to find. The argument which was

developing was that a non-Greek culture which received Greek things very seldom just went overboard and said, "We'll copy all that." They thought, "That reminds me of something which we do already. We'll do it in that way." And they ignore all the rest. It's only the Romans, who had no background whatsoever, who just fell for it hook, line, and sinker. The Etruscans also, in a way, except that they had Phoenician influence as well. And the Egyptians took no notice at all. They had got a brilliant artistic idiom, which they had worked out two or three thousand years before; it served them effectively and they were totally undisturbed by classical realism. So they were very happy; they are the big success story, it seems to me, in antiquity. The Greeks were floundering around and they had this great flash of realism, which didn't really get them very far. It finishes up with rather exotic Hellenistic and then rather wooden Roman.

SMITH: So you don't feel that it's part of your job to make a distinction between what's a great work of art and a secondary work of art?

BOARDMAN: No, because that obviously depends on the viewer. I'm more interested in the intention and impact that it made when it was made, and what the intention of the artist was, and what the response of the viewer was, than in what we make of it today, and whether we spend a lot of money on it or a little money on it or think it's great or whatever it may be, or think, "My God, this is the quintessence of modern art"—all those ghastly Cycladic idols. [laughter]

LYONS: I read not the nicest review by [Jeremy] Tanner of *The Oxford History of Classical Art*. Sometimes you are presented as often being an arbiter of quality, of values, but you don't seem to agree with that, do you?

BOARDMAN: Well, if I am, I'm not aware of it. I suppose, in a way, by simply writing about Greek art one is perpetuating a view that it is worth writing about. But I'm writing about Greek art because that's my subject. I don't mean that this is the only thing that's worth writing about. And that view might have been counteracted a bit by *Diffusion*, where it comes over fairly strongly I think that if I had a choice I'd rather collect Egyptian sculpture than Greek sculpture—no question. But that's irrelevant; I don't see any relevance in that at all.

SMITH: We had been talking about the question of intellectual community, and you had mentioned that oftentimes the most important kinds of connections would be the ones that were here and there, abroad, and so forth, and I wonder to what degree international congresses have provided an important and useful function in terms of regularizing that kind of contact?

BOARDMAN: Not a great deal. I do not go to an excessive number of them. They don't very often offer the opportunity to sit down quietly with someone and talk for a long time; there are too many other people about the place. A big one in Berlin in 1988 was pretty good for that because it was set in an enormous

building and there were lots of corners and you could have a cup of coffee and talk to someone. I find it happens much more if I go away to lecture somewhere. Then you are the only visitor, and the people there want to talk to you and enjoy talking to you and you can sit with the students and talk for a while. You can talk to whoever has invited you at dinner, and all the really interesting exchanges of information and ideas and what one's working on happen much more easily in that sort of setting. Or one visits a place simply to go and work in a museum or look at the museum and sometimes you meet people that way. I think international congresses probably work better for the more junior scholars, who get the opportunity of seeing and listening to other people and then they talk with them themselves. I haven't ever really regarded them as places I must go to so that I can have a long talk with so-and-so.

SMITH: It sounds like the connections you were mentioning before happen, in a sense, almost by accident, and the people that you need to talk to will change from time to time as your work has changed.

BOARDMAN: As my interests change, yes, that's true. Though there are some old friends one is glad to see at any time, and one talks back over old problems. One never ever totally gives up any subject. I think the only subject I've ever totally given up was something we've never touched, the Greek Bronze Age, and the [Leonard R.] Palmer business.

SMITH: You gave it up in the sense that you decided not to work in it?

BOARDMAN: I decided I wasn't that engaged by the Greek Bronze Age. I would much rather work on the historic period of Greece. The archaeology of the Greek Bronze Age seemed to me to be a rather different category of material, and though I was interested in one aspect of it, in seals and gems, I didn't want to pursue them any further. Anyway, there's a limit to the amount one could take in, and I would much rather get later in date than remain early. I think that's the only area of what had been a fairly absorbed interest which I had quite deliberately gone away from.

We should have said something about Palmer. There's a book [on your list] somewhere, *The Date of the Knossos Tablets*. Way back in about 1960, the professor of comparative philology in Oxford, Leonard Palmer, reckoned that Arthur Evans had got the date of the Knossos tablets all wrong. Not only that but that he had falsified the evidence deliberately to get the answer that he wanted. Palmer was using the notebooks in the museum here of the excavations at Knossos to prove it. I was in the museum at the time, and I had shown him the notebooks. He seized on the thing and he said, "Gosh, well that proves it, doesn't it?" It very obviously didn't, and for a while I collaborated with him in trying to produce a book which would lay out what the evidence was. It became very clear very rapidly that he knew what he was going to prove. So we went

our separate ways, both of us having already been committed to Oxford University Press to write a book about it.

We each wrote our [own] book about it, and they were published under the same cover, one half never having seen the other half. They didn't actually put an asbestos sheet between the two halves, but this was talked about, I'm sure. [laughter] I don't think I've got a copy of it here. That was a rather nasty period. This wasn't influential in deciding me not to work on the Bronze Age, but it certainly helped me feel quite happy not to have to deal with it again. Of course I had to go over all the notebook evidence for the digging at the palace and find why they thought what they did about the stratigraphy and the date of the various things, and although the results are not terribly clear, it was at least clear to me that there was no jiggery pokery. What they said they believed, they had good reason to believe, and the way Palmer was operating as a non-archaeologist who was going to prove something was really rather unpleasant. I think unpleasant is about the word. That rather nasty period of two or three years culminated in the book. It blows up again from time to time, because people will think sometimes that perhaps the tablets are later, though not as late as Palmer wanted them; he wanted them later than Pylos, even. I don't worry about that now. I read about it, but I don't get involved.

LYONS: I was wondering whether it might be a good chance to turn to the

international collaborative project, the *Lexicon* one?

BOARDMAN: The *Lexicon*. Do you know the *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*?

SMITH: No, I don't.

BOARDMAN: It was about twenty years ago, I suppose, that Lilly [Ghali-Kahil, a professor in Paris and Fribourg, Egyptian by birth, and first wife of the present Secretary General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, had the idea that a great lexicon of classical mythology [Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexicon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*], which was written at the beginning of this century, should be rewritten from the point of view purely of the iconography of the myths, and that this should be a grand, international project. I knew her reasonably well because we had been students at the same period in Athens; she was at the French school. She had one or two meetings with various people about it in Paris, and I was the British representative, mainly because she knew me I suppose, and because I was reasonably active in the area. She got together a team and she got together some money, mainly from the Swiss. She persuaded a handful of academies in different parts of the world to give some money to make an editorial center in Basel. We set off with a long, long list of names, from Aara to Zeus, or whatever one ends up with. We would go through the whole lot, and this would

be a rigorous piece of scholarship in which each article will be laid out in the same way, with a little introduction, literary sources, a catalog of representations laid out iconographically, selectively if need be, with commentary.

Nobody thought we could do it. Most of us didn't think we could do it. We had an unhelpful president for the first volume, [Olivier] Reverdin, who was eventually positively working against us, so we threw him out—an epic occasion in Athens. We found a publisher [Artemis Verlag] who was sticky but very, very good; the only publisher we could find who would take these volumes and just publish them, without a subsidy. But then they had all the rights. We had to do all the rest of it, and it had to be a certain length, and if we went over that length we had to find the money for it. Well, that did reasonably well. We got one big double volume out, and then finances were getting rather tight, and the [J. Paul] Getty [Trust] came like the U.S. cavalry over the horizon. They saw a project which was actually going to work. It was already started and knew what it was doing, and the only reason why it could ever fail was because it didn't have any money. So the money came—more than came from various academies—and we got to the point where there were about twenty-five or thirty different academies around the world who were contributing, plus the Getty. There was a scientific committee, so called, of forty or fifty different countries, who had representatives who promised help, usually in terms of letting people go and take photographs,

giving photographs, or giving information about objects and all the rest of it.

It is one of the biggest international organizations that's going, which actually works and does things. I remember when we were persuading Harold Williams and Nancy [Englander Williams] that we were a good thing. They came over to Paris for one of our scientific committee meetings, and they came into a big room in a rather scruffy school in Paris, which we had for the occasion. There was a long table all the way round the room, and fifty-odd people were introduced to them. It was a global tour, and they were really very, very impressed indeed. There was Israel sitting next to Jordan, and Britain was on speaking terms with the Irish, Greeks with the Turks, and nobody seemed to worry; there were the top people from each country there. We were producing big double volumes. A volume of text may be up to about a thousand pages, close print, two columns. The plates volume has six, seven, or eight hundred plates, with four or five pictures on each plate, and we do it every two years. The seventh volume was out a month or two ago, the eight and last volume will be out in two years' time. It's incredible, it really is.

I was the English representative and editor, which meant that I looked at all English-language articles and did quite a lot of writing of them myself as well. This was one of the ways one got to learn about other areas, like Roman things, and it has been quite hard work. It has taken a very great deal of time, because

not only does one edit the English-written articles carefully, one reads all the other ones. Well, to be honest, I don't read quite so much of them now as I used to. I read them, commented on them, and thought about what was wrong, what was right, what they'd forgotten, what was false, you know, all this sort of business. So it absorbed a major part of one's research time and energy, and indeed this still goes on while we're putting together now the last and eighth volume. But it's been a spectacular success.

There have been regular meetings of an editorial committee of six or seven people. There's me, Lilly, a Swiss, an Italian, a German, a French, and a Greek, so that's truly international. Then every two years there's a big meeting like the one that's happening in Santa Monica, when the scientific committee gets together and you explain to them what's going on. This I think has been a quite incredible example of academic international cooperation, which is virtually unrivaled.

LYONS: Were there any methodological disagreements as you were going along?

BOARDMAN: It took a long time to work out what the principles should be. Our French colleagues, Philippe Bruneau in particular, were really worried about *principes*. A lot of it was worked out as one went along. General guidelines and layouts of articles were determined first. A little bit of semipolitics crept in—we

ought to give the Spanish something, so let's give them these titles. The big surprise then was how well they did them, whereas some other people you gave them to, reputable scholars, had no conception whatsoever of writing to a scale or to a deadline, or to a word limit. Time and time again they would produce an article which was three times what we wanted, and one just had to either throw it back to them or rewrite it; this was the most work—rewriting other people's things to get a balance. I don't think that politics has intruded too much, and gradually we've learnt who you can trust and who you can't trust.

LYONS: How do you select the people that will do a certain theme? They've already done work on it?

BOARDMAN: Well, there are different views on this. We sit around as the editorial committee and we work one or two volumes ahead on who we should ask. The principle will sometimes be that they've written a book on the subject, so let them do it. I've always thought that that's probably not a good idea, because they're bound to write it too long; they know too much about the subject. Somebody else would probably do it better by using their book and boiling it down properly, and in practice that has turned out very often to be the case. It's better not to take the expert, but use his work.

The other thing which has often been a problem is whether you do the Greek and the Roman things together. In some of the big articles, we've had

someone do Greek Apollo and somebody else do Roman Apollo, and the overlap is considerable. Much of the Greek material is in copies of the Roman period, and I think it comes out rather confusingly. So for the really big articles it's best to have one person to do both, and they can marry the two together. That I think is the only other big problem we've had.

We had little minor local political problems: the Bulgarians, who regard themselves as Thrace, said that they would like to take on the eastern periphery. But what they meant by eastern periphery meant not even Thrace, it meant Bulgaria. So we had endless arguments with them and eventually agreed that they weren't dealing with the eastern periphery, they were dealing with the Thracian periphery, and the rest had to be done by other people. Then they only stuck to Bulgaria, and luckily it was another Balkan scholar who said, "No, you can't do this. We must put it all in together." So there were little problems like that along the way.

LYONS: What next?

BOARDMAN: Well, we're talking about that now. There's got to be an index volume to be made. There are various thoughts of keeping going, because we've got the organization there, and with any luck one might be able to keep the money flowing from some of the academies, at any rate. One would be able to mount comparable projects or something not unrelated and build on the enormous

archive which has been created of photographs and notes on the iconography of the Greek and Roman world, which would be a pity to disperse or not continue to build on and use. This is where the electronic side of it comes in. If we had started the *Lexicon* now, the whole thing would have been an electronic publication, but it was started twenty years ago.

So that's been exciting. I'm quite glad it's got to the end. This was the only other time when I took a risk, in saying that I'd manage the Heracles article. But it was at a time when nobody particularly wanted to touch it, and the Greeks said, "All right, we'll do it." If the Greeks got hold of it, it might have become too dispersed, so I said, "All right, I'll do it." There were plenty of other people to ask to do parts of it, and they all rallied round very well.

LYONS: It's one of the biggest articles.

BOARDMAN: It was enormous.

SMITH: One of the things we wanted to talk to you about also was your relationship with buyers and collectors and dealers and the role that the antiquities market has, both the dangers involved with it and then what opportunities it provides.

BOARDMAN: Well, the world has changed a great deal over the last forty years or so in attitudes to this. One never hesitated in the old days. You'd go and look at a private collection, however it had been formed, publish it, work on it;

you were delighted to see the material. As the years passed there were some very, very scandalous activities going on in terms of the deliberate robbing of sites to build collections, of which the worst I suppose was the Cyclades, and to some degree sarcophagi in Turkey. The whole idea of people collecting became as it were almost dirty—all collectors should be burned, and this sort of thing, which is absurd. This was normally an attitude fostered by those who didn't work on objects but who worked on excavations. They didn't appreciate how important it was to other people that an object could say as much as its context. Their argument would always be, "But if you've torn it from its context it's worthless." There are many things that we study where the context is almost irrelevant. The fact that it exists is important. But all right, one's sad that a site has been wrecked and it's a criminal activity now in many countries, and it's up to those countries to see that it stops. Things have changed, certainly.

One is a good deal more cautious now about what one publishes. We used to go regularly, Donna Kurtz and I, up to Sotheby's and Christie's when the auction sales were coming up. We took lots of detailed photographs of all the material because we wanted it for the archive. We've gradually stopped doing that, because it might look as though we were in some ways supporting them, although we never gave them information or opinions. We usually turned up there too late to have any effect of that sort. People bring in things to me, Greek

gems to look at, and whereas before I would be fairly frank and say exactly what I thought of them, now I say, "I can't really give an opinion on it, but talking off the top of my head and not putting anything on paper, I think it might be such and such." I won't say whether I think it's good and valuable or not. I'll say, "Yes, I think that's an Etruscan scarab with Achilles on it," and that's it.

LYONS: Are your concerns legal ones, that if you were wrong, they could seek damages?

BOARDMAN: No, though I'm aware that this is a possibility, and this is one of the other reasons for being a little cagey.

[Tape V, Side One]

BOARDMAN: I'm still very happy to see material of this sort, to know that it exists. To have a note of it, to take an impression of a gem and put it away in a drawer somewhere so that there's a record of it for somebody else to look at one day, perhaps, even if I don't want to. We should have photographs of the things so that they are known about, because so many of them just disappear from sight into the hands of private collectors who don't exhibit their material, or don't talk about it, or keep it as an investment in the bank, or something like that. But I think, in a way, we have a duty to keep an eye on this material. We don't need to encourage it in any way, we don't need to enhance its value by talking much about it, but to pretend it isn't there is not in the interests of scholarship, and we

have a duty to see if we can keep track of it all. I fear many museums now, particularly in the States, won't touch anything of this sort, will they, unless it's got a pedigree? The British Museum does this. Other museums are a bit more relaxed. But it's always seemed to me that if anything comes on the market which is of importance—not aesthetically, because that could mean anything, but of archaeological or historical importance—it should be incumbent on a public collection to get it so that it is available to scholars and the public. Rather than what they do now, which is just turn their backs and pretend it isn't there. As a result it gets lost to scholarship and the public. But that's not a very popular view.

LYONS: So you don't agree then with the *AJA* [*American Journal of Archaeology*] publication policy of simply not publishing material that is not documented?

BOARDMAN: I think on the whole they have been fairly cautious. The way they practice it may be open to criticism, but what they actually write and say seems to me to be broadly acceptable. But a lot of the criticism of it is very unrealistic. The idea that if you stopped collecting, nobody would ever rob a grave again, when they've been robbing graves through the last ten millennia probably, is absurd. That will never happen. People will make less money, perhaps, if there are fewer collectors, but they will still make some money and

they'll still go on doing it. If they don't do it for money they'll do it because it's there and because this is part of the thing that you do, and your father has done and your grandfather has done.

When I went walking around Boeotia as a student, I stayed with local farmers, and they would say, "Oh yes, we find lots of things," and they'd pull out a sack of terra-cottas, which they let the children play with, and I suppose if they found some rather good ones they'd put them in a suitcase and take them off to Thebes and sell them. They seem to think it's part of their birthright, as it were; it was found in their field. It is, in a way. You can't easily argue against that. It's still true in Britain. If I dig up an antiquity in my garden, provided it isn't silver or gold, it's mine. So there's a lot of strange hypocrisy going on in the whole business, and there are good collectors and bad collectors, just as there are good museums and bad museums.

LYONS: Can you comment on some of the good collectors.

BOARDMAN: I've been quite a bit connected with George Ortiz and the big collection which he has built up over the years. He's a Swiss collector, very rich, with a very, very good eye. He has mainly small objects, bronzes. He put on an exhibition of his things in St. Petersburg; it's been on in London and it's going to go to Berlin. He tried to get it into the States but it fell through. It might turn up there one day. A certain amount of flack rose up when his

collection came to be shown at the Royal Academy [of Arts] a year or two ago. I was a bit involved. I'd written the introduction to his catalog. He seems to me to be a good collector.

Whenever he gets material which turns out to have belonged to someone else, he goes to a lot of trouble to give it back, even sometimes when it's very difficult to give it back. He's tried it with Greeks, for instance, and because they weren't spectacular and important [objects], they weren't much interested in knowing that attention was being drawn to the fact that things had been disappearing from their museums. Under the first [Andreas] Papandreou administration he got nowhere, and it's only when the other man came in, [Konstantinos] Mitsotakis, that he found that he was received well and they were grateful for having things back.

Also, he's collecting the sort of thing which you can't target for. You can't go and say, "If we plunder this corner of the cemetery we'll find something for Mr. Ortiz," as you can with certain other objects. So that his collecting doesn't generate any deliberate robbing of particular areas, which is the really terrible thing that does go on. If the object hasn't got a pedigree, it still, one suspects, has been known for a long, long time; the pedigree has been concealed for tax or inheritance reasons or something like that. But that seems to be a quite different category, and Ortiz is behaving responsibly as a collector. He's

showing his collection; anyone can go and see it whenever they want to. I'd give him higher marks than some museums, who sell off quite a lot of their material from time to time and are quite unscrupulous about buying material which they well know has come out of the ground last week, as it were.

The world that we see of this in classical archaeology is a slightly distorted one. The Kabul museum has been totally robbed and looted by now. The material has gone into Pakistan and it's waiting on the market. I feel that the museums of the world should get together now and buy it and rescue it. One day perhaps it will go back to Afghanistan. Probably never, because the fundamentalist Islamic government of Afghanistan couldn't care less about anything which wasn't itself Islamic. It's not part of their national heritage, and many Islamic states abuse and neglect anything which is not Islamic. So national heritage seems to me to be about as senseless as most nationalism tends to be. It's global heritage, and if a country won't look after what happens to be on its soil, that it's not interested in at the time, then others should. It's much, much, much more complicated than people make it sound.

LYONS: What other collectors have you come to know personally? Do you know the Fleischmans [Barbara and Lawrence], for example?

BOARDMAN: Oh, I've met them in New York. And Leon Levy. I don't know about how they collect or what they get. Obviously they've got a lot of stuff

which they shouldn't have, which should have been elsewhere. I suspect some south Italian areas and cemeteries can be targeted for getting vases, judging by the way they are appearing. That's something which should be stopped, but you stop it at the source. If the Italians aren't prepared or able to stop it, I don't think we should get hot under the collar about the people who collect it, use it, and show it to scholars for study. It's very, very tricky.

Occasionally, it flitters through one's mind to wonder why we are doing it at all. Are we getting overobsessive in feeling that we must know about every scrap and morsel of antiquity lurking under the ground, and that we must know about it in its exact context—where it is and everything else about it. Do we really need to do that? Is antiquity itself more important than our interest in studying it, which we exercise in our way, which the past has exercised in different ways, and the future will exercise in quite other ways? That is, the exercise is more important than what we think to be results.

LYONS: I suppose you could argue that looking at the object as an object has been done for a very long time and contextual approaches have a relatively shorter life, so should be—

BOARDMAN: Things should be preserved, obviously, yes, but we have got almost obsessive about it by now. We'll spend enormous amounts of time and money on trying to preserve and keep something which we know enough about

already without doing any more with it. People criticize the way things have been dug up in the past—[Heinrich] Schliemann and the rest—and every generation improves and gets it better. There's no real doubt in my mind that in about another generation digging will have stopped. Everything will be done by distant sensing of some sort. You will find the shape of objects, ruins, and everything else without having to disturb them at all, and then you can decide if you really feel that that object is something you would like to have in the open air for people to see. Instead of all this scrabbling away with pickaxes and shovels, relentlessly destroying everything along the way, packing it away in cases and then never publishing it. The real criminals in this are people who do it in the name of scholarship, which is us.

SMITH: Did you know the Ionides family?

BOARDMAN: Oh Ionides—a very, very old family. They were Victorian. They gave most of their pictures to the Victoria and Albert; it's just the gem collection that was kept in the family, that's all. It's a very old collection indeed.

SMITH: I have been told by a number of people that there are still important private painting collections, particularly here in Britain, but also elsewhere, that will change the ways we think about aspects of modern—modern meaning post-sixteenth-century—painting. Do you know if there are important private antiquities collections in Britain?

BOARDMAN: No. I think one or two people have, twenty or thirty years ago, bought a few Greek vases, partly because they were interested in them, partly as a sort of investment. Lord Normanby, for instance, has a choice little selection of four or five very, very fine red-figure vases, which he got because this was good material. He was interested in classicism. He belonged to the old Society of Dilettantes, so it was appropriate, and that's all he bought, just a very few, very high quality vases. They are private, but any scholar could see them at any time and have photographs published. I don't think there are many others.

There are Greeks who make collections of these things, like [Stavros] Niarchos. They would show them too, if they were allowed to. Niarchos bought the Northampton vase, but we say it's part of our national heritage for some extraordinary reason, so the poor man can't take it around and show it. It's going to be shown in the Benaki Museum, I gather, this spring. They've let it out to be shown for a short exhibition.

LYONS: He keeps it in London, then?

BOARDMAN: I think it has to be kept in Britain. So the result of applying the rules of national heritage simply means that you can no longer see the Northampton vase, whereas before you could go to Northampton and look at it, study it, pull it out of its case, dig holes in it, which I did. A lot of these laws operate against the best interests of the objects themselves, if the objects have

interests.

SMITH: I wanted to ask you a few epistemological questions, to get at your approach to things, and the simplest one is, What is a fact? How do you know that something's a fact when you're working in archaeology?

BOARDMAN: Well, physical facts we can agree about, presumably: size, shape, composition of things. What deductions from them are facts? I think one has to take a sort of consensus. I don't think we're really dealing with fact, we're dealing with opinions or conclusions of varying degrees of plausibility. Some are highly plausible and some are less plausible and they are going to shift around in the spectrum from time to time as different evidence comes in or as you look at them in different ways or analyze them in different ways. In a way, something which you predict can prove to be a fact; something turns up and shows that it was right. But I'm not quite sure that even that quite qualifies, because it always is reinterpreted in some way. The only facts that I'm dealing with are objects, which are facts because they exist, and I can say something about them which I know is true. That is why I prefer to start with what I know about and I know to be true before I go off and do anything else and start looking for questions which they pose.

SMITH: Are there interpretations that you have made that now seem to you less solid?

BOARDMAN: I'm very reluctant ever to give up any of my prize ideas. I've modified many of them in many ways. I think that whatever set me off on them in the first place, because it was based usually on physical evidence, seemed to me to be a legitimate deduction from what I was looking at, and what I could see and what I knew of comparable material. That, on the whole, would always remain true until something else, which I would regard as a fact, was found which proved it wrong. I think quite a number of trivial things [have been wrong], but I can't think offhand what they were.

SMITH: Well, conversely, are there hypotheses that you had earlier that have now been strengthened? Something that moved from being a hypothesis to being something you would consider well proven, given the evidence that now exists?

BOARDMAN: There was one quite interesting phenomenon that arose from the Euboean pottery. I was looking at Euboean pottery from Al Mina, and I said, "Perhaps this class of material is Euboean as well, in which case all this would follow and be very interesting." A few years after that a new excavation in Euboea of the right period produced bushels of it. Good, great, I was right. That, I wouldn't say was quite fact, but there was a very, very high plausibility that that guess, which was based on circumstantial evidence and probability, became highly plausible because the facts, the objects, emerged to demonstrate it.

Because it was a long time ago, that discovery became a sort of

orthodoxy; it gets into the text books as the Euboeans being people who traveled to the east and went all over the place. And because it became an orthodoxy, now of course it gets attacked, because all orthodoxies are attacked on quite different grounds. Very often one finds with that sort of thing that the original arguments and their strengths have been forgotten totally. This happens with this to some degree. I think my argument is perfectly secure; it is Euboean pottery and it was found also in the east. You can interpret why it's there in different ways—whether Euboeans took it there, Phoenicians took it there, or Syrians took it there. But that it is Euboean and it comes from Euboea, nobody would easily argue with now; that's as near a fact as you could get. It's backed by science as well—clay analysis and the rest.

One of the big debates nowadays is whether we've all been too Greco-centric for too long, interpreting the rest of the ancient world through Greek eyes, as we're bound to, in some degree. What about the Phoenicians, what about the other people? I've dealt with the Phoenicians a great deal, so I've got great sympathy for the non-Greeks, which grew out of writing *The Greeks Overseas* and all these other things. But in producing arguments against Greek influence or the role of the Greeks, [many scholars] totally forget what it was based on, and they argue that the Phoenicians are everywhere, doing everything; they are the important influence in Greece. Therefore they quite blandly call

everything which looks oriental, Phoenician, even though old research, well established and perfectly well proven, has demonstrated that it was not Phoenician, it was Syrian, or it all comes from Assyria, a totally different place with a different language, a different people, and everything else—eastern, Semite still, but not Phoenician. Because Phoenicians are the flavor of the month, that's the label that gets attached, and they've forgotten what older views were based on. This happens a great deal, I'm afraid. Fashions and swings in interest are too often generated by factors other than a further dispassionate look at what the evidence actually is.

SMITH: Archaeology has had a highly politicized history, at least in aspects: the way the Nazis used it, and the various Marxist varieties of archaeology.

BOARDMAN: Well, yes, we fashion our view of the past to suit current interests and trends, but I think that's exaggerated in a way. I don't think most scholars most of the time do this—or if they are doing it, they are doing it very subconsciously. I don't think most scholars working on antiquity, on ancient objects, are much affected by their subconscious, or the thought that they are living in a Marxist state or a non-Marxist state or in the middle of an empire or anything like that at all. It's very easy to build up a picture to make it look as though they are, but I suspect then that whoever is doing that is operating to a certain agenda as well and wishing to prove it and so finding evidence for it.

If you worked hard enough you'd find the reverse is probably true. One thinks of Martin Bernal. He has very good arguments about the historiography of the nineteenth century and the attitudes to Phoenicians, Semites, and the rest. But then you stop and think. [Matthew] Arnold is in the middle of it—the Rugby attitude, or the playing fields of Eton, or wherever you like. Then you think of Matthew Arnold's poem, "As some grave Tyrian traders from the sea . . ."
["The Scholar Gipsy"] He was as much on the side of the Phoenicians as the Greeks. The heroes for him were the Phoenicians and not the Greeks. The heroes for him were Sohrab and Rustum, not Achilles and Ajax. Could one not, if one had the time and went to the trouble to do it, probably produce a picture of nineteenth-century scholarship which is totally the reverse of that which is offered in terms of the imperialist attitude or the Marxist attitude? The manipulation of modern evidence is even worse than the manipulation of ancient evidence.

SMITH: The manipulation of modern evidence?

BOARDMAN: Yes, I mean selective quotation, if you like. If you want to prove a point you can find enough evidence to make it look highly plausible, provided you ignore everything else. This happens a great deal. It happens in archaeology and ancient history, but it happens, I'm quite sure, in the modern world even more, in the scholarship of social history of the last two hundred years.

LYONS: Do students here demand to read and discuss [Martin Bernal's] *Black Athena* as much as they do now in the U.S.?

BOARDMAN: No. They are vaguely aware of it. Not much more. I would have been inclined, if I was a bit younger and still in business, and if there seemed to be a good enough group of people interested, to get them onto it and start talking about it. Quite apart from the historiography, which looks fine, though I'm never quite sure, I've come to think that Bernal's got quite a lot of good ideas. He hasn't got into the subject well enough; it's too big a subject just to dive into from being an orientalist. It led me a bit to consider it, mainly because I got worried about everything being called Phoenician when I think it's Syrian or something else. And then one thinks, "Well, perhaps a lot of it is Egyptian." Though Bernal hasn't written up that particular period yet and only made suggestions, I think he's probably got quite a case there—not of the influence of Egypt, but the fact that Egyptian things were known about and were observed and copied. It's rather like Greek art going to India. The Greeks aren't responsible for what happens to it; it's the receivers who are responsible. So I have some degree of sympathy with this, but Bernal should have been not one man with an ax to grind, but part of a small team; I think that really would have got somewhere. I met him for the first time in Quebec last year. A charming man I thought; I couldn't fail to get on with him.

SMITH: What are you working on now?

BOARDMAN: People ask me that, and I knew you would, and I thought to myself, "How do I ever answer that?" because what I was working on yesterday afternoon would not be what I was working on this morning, which might not be what I intend to work on at the weekend. I've just finished an article about Pandora in fifth-century Athens. I'm not quite sure whether it's dotty or not, so I've sent it to a friend who knows about Greek religion, and he can read it and tell me whether it's too dotty to go ahead with. If he says it's too dotty and it's too speculative, we'll dump it. If he says why not, we'll do something with it.

I'm getting more and more interested in going back to the orientalizing problems. Again, is it Phoenicia or is it Syria? Where does Egypt come into it in this early period? I'm trying to learn a little bit more about the eastern side of things. [Writing about] diffusion has made me look at things from the outside for a change. Even doing *The Greeks Overseas*, I was still looking from the inside out rather than from the outside in. One of the aspects of this is that we need to be able first to define rather more clearly, what was the east producing? We know what Egyptian art looked like. Do we know what the Phoenicians were making, can we honestly say? Generally, we can't. Do we know what the Syrians were making? On the whole we do. Going back to the Syrian things, I'm working again on north Syrian seals, because seals I think are more

indicative than pottery for this area in this period. I'm looking at the range of seals which are being made in Syria—where they got to, what variety there is, how far they are totally distinctive and unlike Phoenician ones, therefore belonging to a totally different cultural milieu, which was the one which influenced Greece.

SMITH: Why don't we know much about what Phoenician objects look like?

BOARDMAN: The usual answer to that is, nobody's done a deep excavation of the big Phoenician cities. Well, that may be true, they may not have been properly stratified and excavated, but the fact remains that there are enormous masses of objects from those cities, and we as archaeologists can give them a date and a provenance. We know what there was there. Otherwise we are very much led by remarks about Phoenicians in the Bible. An enormous fuss is made about Homer because he mentions the Phoenicians. That is enough for everybody to say the Phoenicians are responsible for all trade in the ancient world. It's crazy. But plenty of other people were making these things, right, left and center, and if you start looking around, not for ivory but for bronze pieces in the Greek world, you find they are purely north Syrian, smothered with Aramaic inscriptions, which are not Phoenician.

So there's plenty of work to be done in defining things a little bit more clearly. You can't begin to say who was influential until you know what they've

got to influence people with. The Phoenicians had an ease of movement around the Mediterranean because they'd got the shipping. What they were producing, what they were carrying as well, is still very highly debatable. To say that anything that looks Egyptian must be Phoenician is very dangerous indeed and it's what people tend to do. Or they get to the point of taking Syrian material with Syrian inscriptions and just calling it Phoenician because that's the thing to do. So there's a lot more to be done there, and that's one of the other things I'm doing. I might do a new revised edition of *Greek Art*, bringing it up to date a bit, because I think I know a little bit more about it than I did thirty years ago or more.

SMITH: You've done two revisions of that book?

BOARDMAN: Not really. I did one light revision because the American market said it was all very well having a book on Greek art without a photograph of the Delphi charioteer in it, but they really would need one before they'd give it to the pupils. So it was lightly revised to put in a few photographs of the obvious things, which I had almost deliberately left out before, because I didn't want just to peddle the usual stuff. I would rather put in some of the less familiar. So that was a light revision, it didn't really amount to very much, a few captions changed here and there.

SMITH: What would be the factors that would lead to a more major revision?

Would it be new information that's been discovered?

BOARDMAN: No, I think more my own feelings about it. I think I understand better now what was important about the classical revolution of the fifth century and the attempt at realism. I feel I can understand a bit better now what it really amounted to and how very dramatic it was. I'm much more concerned, and this is no doubt partly the result of new archaeologies and structuralists and the rest, with trying to understand or demonstrate the intention of the artist and the response of the viewer, which I think you can attain. We know enough about the ancient world now to get under the skin of many of the people in it. We are familiar with what I've come to call their visual experience. If one put oneself down in a street in antiquity, one could tell probably whether it was Athens or Corinth by the sorts of things they had around them all the time, just as we can judge whether we're in Geneva or London by the things we have around us. But this is what one needs to work from; it's rather old-fashioned.

It's rather like going back to making Victorian paintings of ancient Rome, which were pretty accurate, actually, though the whole place was made to look cleaner than it must have been. But if we could visualize and empathize with the setting in which these things were viewed and handled and used, we might understand them a bit better. So it would be much more of an attempt at antiquity's view of Greek art, rather than a twentieth-century view of Greek art,

of which there's too much about now, which tries to interpret Greek art as though interpreting a modern painting, and finds things in it which no ancient Greek would ever have either put there or looked for there, I'm pretty sure of that.

SMITH: So you'll have an argument to make.

BOARDMAN: It won't go over as an argument, because I think that would spoil the book. It's not meant to be a book full of arguments. I'll present it in terms of what it meant to an ancient Greek, standing there and looking at the Parthenon. Not the way we look at the Parthenon—the British Museum sculptures—but as a complete building at a particular period when Athens was in a particular state and condition historically and socially. Why was it created for just that moment in just that way? That seems to me to be a question which can be answered plausibly. Well, fairly plausibly. [laughter] That's a bit different from saying, "Then the sculpture started looking like that, and then they made the columns a bit thinner," and so on. Though you've got to do that as well. I'll put in a bit more architecture too.

SMITH: Did you do any reading in psychoanalysis or existentialism?

BOARDMAN: Nothing serious, but one read the articles that were about the place in magazines and Sunday newspapers. I occasionally picked up a book or two, but not with the intention of learning from them something which I was going to use in my work. It was merely because they were about the place and

people were reading them and I thought I'd like to find out about it as well.

SMITH: In terms of the contemporary cultural life of the post-World War II, period, let's say, the fifties, sixties and seventies, could you just give us a sense of who your favorite writers were, or the kinds of films you enjoyed going to see.

BOARDMAN: Serious writers or just writer writers?

SMITH: Just writer writers.

BOARDMAN: Well, I don't know, I read everything that I had time to read in terms of the modern novel. Not too many serious books. I was a fairly regular film-goer. That's been replaced by television.

SMITH: You would just go to whatever movie was open?

BOARDMAN: Oh no, I'd be discriminating, but I'd be perfectly prepared to be purely entertained or made to laugh, as well as to be sent out sobbing from Ingmar Bergman or something like that—the works. I had a fairly broad spectrum of taste in this, just as on television now, which I regard as the way of unwinding at the end of the day. One spends the last couple of hours or so of the day watching the box. If I had the choice between a rather serious study of social conditions in lower Bessarabia or something like this, and a rerun of a comic program, which I knew was good ten years ago and I'd like to see it again, I'd see it again.

SMITH: What about in terms of painting—contemporary painting and sculpture?

BOARDMAN: Contemporary painting and sculpture. This is, I suppose, a symptom of age. As an undergraduate, after the war, one took it all rather seriously and looked at it and tried to react to it in the way in which the critics told you you ought to be reacting to it. I've got very much more skeptical as time has passed and think that there's a hell of a lot of baloney going on out there. But one can somehow instinctively perhaps see something which the artist had thought about himself and was trying to do something with, and respond to it in a way. Sometimes there is a message, there is a passage of information or thought or mood, which one can still respond to somehow. And there's an awful lot where there is no thought, no positive attempt to convey any message whatsoever except "buy me." I've become a little bit more hardened in my views about this and some of the funny prizes which have been given recently for modern things.

Some I can say, "Yes, this is good." There's this woman [Ruth] Whitebread, who did a cast of the inside of a house. I thought that was fascinating. They pulled it to pieces eventually. But that somehow said something about inside-outside, and I don't know, familiar things in an unfamiliar way, which was very exciting. But then somebody else comes along with piles of rice and puts neon tubes through them, and it's only the art critics who tell you

what you must believe about that, that it is telling you about the starving poor of Africa or . . . I don't know, whatever they find to say about it. One's deep suspicion is that the artist himself who's a serious artist, wouldn't have a minute of it. He'd say, "No, I did this because I wanted to do it and I felt about the materials in this way." Or he'd say, "Well, I did it like this hoping that critics would say things like that and people would spend a lot of money on it." So I'm not much taken. But I'm always very impressed by the way that what seem to be the best modern artists are also brilliant traditional draftsmen. One can take David Hockney very readily indeed, and then you find out almost by accident that he's a brilliant draftsman. He can do things the hard way, and therefore he has the right to do things in any other way he wishes. That's true of probably a dwindling minority of them nowadays.

SMITH: How good are your own drafting skills?

BOARDMAN: Negligible. In fact we have life classes in the Cast Gallery now and I've started going to them. It's very, very difficult indeed, because I had a lifetime of drawing things exactly and accurately as I see them: objects, bronzes, anything you like.

SMITH: You drew them?

BOARDMAN: Yes. I did all my own drawing of objects and architecture and all the rest of it. It's almost impossible to get away from the feeling that what I

should be producing is a line or tone or replica of what I am seeing. If I leave something out or put something in which isn't there I feel guilty, and that's no good. So I feel that there may not be a great deal of future in that, which I find rather sad, because otherwise it would have been interesting. But I suppose I might be able to kick it eventually. I got very used to doing either a very accurate drawing, or very quick but totally evocative thumbnail sketches. Doing little drawings of scenes on vases or gems, I could very, very rapidly, in a matter of seconds, produce an image which could convey not only the subject but also even a little bit of the style.

LYONS: How do you keep your notes and your own scholarly archives; what form do they take, besides photos?

BOARDMAN: I could show you thousands of little bits of paper, of any different size and shape—not normally cards, because I think they are restrictive in size. I would make notes visually if I could, because if I look at a piece of paper and I see a little drawing on it, it tells me what's on it. I don't have to read it; my writing isn't all that good, so I would normally make notes of objects by making a drawing of them. I try to resist simply getting a Xerox and pinning a note on the back. I might do that as well, if I need the detail, but that's not the same as looking at it carefully enough to even roughly draw it, because if you draw it, you've got to look at it. You don't have to look at anything to hit the

button on a Xerox machine. So my notes are thousands of funny little squiggles and drawings which mean a great deal to me, but not to anybody else. That doesn't count as draftsmanship, I'm afraid, in the art schools.

SMITH: But actually you answered the question I was interested in—the degree to which your notes took the form of drawings, and what you felt you learned from doing the drawing.

BOARDMAN: Even when I was an undergraduate—I was surprised, I came across my notes of lectures—I would take my notes and write them up, and then look at the books and fill them in with drawings which I would copy from the books, done fairly mechanically, but as far as I could see pretty accurately. I've occasionally done that sort of thing again, sat in front of something and done a very careful drawing of bits of it. But more often I've learnt to do the sort of thumbnail sketch which will tell me all I need to know or am likely to need to know.

SMITH: And you do this from the original object?

BOARDMAN: If possible, yes. Otherwise from a book or photograph.

SMITH: Sometimes you will do it from a photograph?

BOARDMAN: Oh yes. Quite often this is all you've got; you see something in a book. Now if I want to remember it, the best thing to do is to do a rough sketch of it and put a reference down underneath it, rather than just writing [a

description]. I'd never find that again.

SMITH: What are your rules of thumb for photographing an object?

BOARDMAN: More and more recently I've taken my own photographs, if I can, with fast film. Though I've got a steady hand; I can [shoot] at a fifteenth of a second and nine times out of ten it'll be a sharp product. So if museums let me, I do a lot of this. I think I'm a pretty good photographer. I did a lot when I was a student, with plate cameras and all the rest, and since then with hand-held cameras. I've gone through various types which have had gimmicks on them and I've given them all up now. I've just got an absolutely basic Pentax, the only gimmick of which is that it has an inbuilt exposure [meter], which you can ignore. So I feel very much at home with cameras and objects.

SMITH: There are so many different ways that people can photograph the same object. There's a lot of evaluative judgment that needs to be made, and yet at the same time if you're producing it as a record you need to have some sort of standardized approach.

BOARDMAN: I would photograph [something] to record what I wanted to remember about it or know about it. But very often I take other photographs, because it's a fine object and if I can look at it in this particular way it will make a good photograph which I might like then to enlarge and hang on the wall. I never actually get round to enlarging them and hanging them on the wall, but

they are the sorts of things which are taken with that in mind. I take quite a lot of photographs simply going about the place, or on holiday, with that in mind—an object, a field, or a pattern on a wall. There's quite a big scattered dossier at home of shots like that, and I think, "One day that will make a good book cover, wouldn't it? If you could wrap that around a book, wouldn't that look fine?" It'll never get used or anything, but it's fun, I enjoy it.

SMITH: I think I'm running out of questions, what about you?

BOARDMAN: What else have I ever done? The Parthenon! I had a theory about the Parthenon frieze, which attracted a certain amount of attention. Again, because it had a sort of political historical interpretation, people might think that this must have grown out of [my] work on Heracles and his political role in Athens, which we talked about yesterday, which is totally untrue, although that must have helped feed it. I can even remember where I was. I was down in the archive and I had been looking at scenes of Heracles being introduced to Olympus, and Athena leads Heracles to Zeus. I thought, "Well, isn't this what the Parthenon frieze is doing? This cavalcade of young men on horses are being led by the citizens and priests of Athens to the gods, and there they are, all sitting, looking at them." Though people have argued they are really facing the other way, they are obviously not; they are facing the procession. Heracles is being led to Zeus because he's being promoted. Who are the young men being

promoted? In that period the only young men who could have been promoted were the people who fought at Marathon. They were promoted to be heroes at just that time. So could it be that the cavalcade represents, in some way or other, the Athenians who had fought at Marathon, and are being led, in the setting of the Panathenaic festival, into the presence not just of their goddess but of all the gods in their form of promotion to be heroes?

In a way, that then provoked an answer to a question which I had never asked myself and most people don't seem to have asked, which is, Why the hell do they make a long frieze like that for the first time on any building? And why, having given themselves these 160 meters of frieze, do they fill up three quarters of it with men on horses? Why do it this way? Greeks are very good at using one thing to symbolize lots of things. Why do all this at all? I put the whole lot together and it all seemed to work reasonably well. There were lots of straws in the wind to suggest that this was a real Panathenaic procession, which had lots of heroic connotations—the mere fact that they had horses, which signifies a hero, meant something. They were shown with their horses because there are horses and horsemen in the procession. A man with a horse is in a way a hero, so it suited, it fitted the scene. It could happen down where the horses were exercised in the procession, down in the Agora. Other things seemed to fit: the twelve gods were down in the Agora because they had an altar there. All these things

seemed to begin to fit; this was a special version of the Panathenaic procession in which the men were being led to the gods because they had earned a form of immortality.

Along the way, because there was such a long cavalcade, I thought perhaps the numbers meant something. So I started adding them up, and then I looked in some of the plans of the layout and started adding up the men there, and it didn't work; there was no correlation at all between the numbers and the numbers of the men who were killed at Marathon. So I gave that up and forgot about it and finished the lecture. Then I came across another scholar, later than the one whose work I had been looking at before for the numbers, a German, [Walter H.] Schuchhardt, who had recalculated the likely numbers, so I did the sums again.

[Tape V, Side Two]

BOARDMAN: Of course that's the thing that people then fasten onto and they say, "Boardman says there are a 192 horsemen, therefore they must be such and such." They either ignore it completely, because classical archaeologists can't cope with numbers—it's so spot on it can't be right, you know. Then they work hard to say, "Well, perhaps there's another leg there and it's really 193, or 190." To my mind that wouldn't matter. It explains why there are so many of the people on the frieze and why uncannily it comes out very close to just the number

who were killed, the ones who are in fact being promoted to be heroes. That seemed to me to be still a good argument, although very few people seem to take it in full. The general argument which led to it didn't depend on the numbers at all, and I think it's still a very good argument.

They don't talk about that. They just wonder about whether they can do the sums differently and come up with some other number. This is very strange; it's quite a good example of people forgetting what the point of the original argument was. They say because it might be a 193 it can't be right, so you can forget all the rest of the argument about what the general symbolism of it all is, which seems to me to be perfectly valid, and a lot of people had been working towards it in different ways. [Werner] Gauer, in Germany, was almost saying the same thing, really. It's fairly simple; it would make sense immediately. Every Athenian would know. You don't have to be able to count, 1, 2, 3, up to 192; you'd know. When you look at the stars and stripes you don't count to see that it's got fifty stars; you know they're there.

This [idea], again, was sparked off by the thought of a comparison between two different media in two different periods, which then led to a trail of thought. You then think of other aspects of it: could numbers mean anything? At first they don't and then they do. I was using the old [Maxime] Collignon books and he had left out half the horses, or something like that. Somebody

writes something about the Parthenon frieze every five minutes, there's a book about it coming out all the time. Lots of other theories have been kicked around; there's young Joan Connelly in Oxford now busily producing yet another version of it. But the more people are critical of it or the more they find alternatives, the easier I find it to think that I'm probably right, or if not right, closer to the truth than any of them. I've thought through all these things before, and I can see where their arguments fall to pieces, and they are not really upsetting mine at all. But that, as you know, is just stubbornness. Once you've had an idea you don't like to give it up. I don't like to give it up, but nobody has disproved it yet, and nobody's has proved any better yet.

SMITH: How can one prove an argument like that?

BOARDMAN: Can't. Even if they've got enough of the frieze and the drawings together to make it the right number, nobody would regard that as proof; they'd say it's just a coincidence. Anybody who knows about statistics and coincidences would know it couldn't be a coincidence, but—

SMITH: That's the sort of argument that can only be proven in the hard sense if you have a literary text from the time.

BOARDMAN: Yes. One might turn up, I suppose, but it's very unlikely. All you can do is attain a degree of plausibility. To my mind it's a highly plausible argument, details of which may be wrong, but the general overall picture is

probably right, and that's the most that one can hope for. Others would say it's a very implausible argument for various reasons, and then when I look at their reasons I don't find that they're reasons at all. But it's a happy hunting ground.

That incidentally, oddly enough, was the point at which I began to look at the Parthenon and its sculptures a good deal more closely and began to think how wonderful they were. I began to think a little bit more about how they were made and what realistic, idealistic classical art really amounted to and what a remarkable phenomenon it was. There was an ex-pupil of mine [Olga Palagia] who was working in much the same way, thinking about how important technique might have been in all this and that all these figures were really modeled figures. They were carved, but they were basically modeled figures. In the plaster casts, except in details, you couldn't tell whether they were casts of marble or of bronze. They all start the same way; they start as modeled figures. It's only with hand-modeled figures worked from the inside out that you can get total realism and naturalism in art. You can't do it from the outside in. So all these probably started as colossal clay and plaster model figures, done by hand.

Every one has been so brainwashed by a couple of poems of Michelangelo into thinking that the Greeks were somehow brilliant people who could face a block of marble, envision a magnificently posed figure inside it, and hack it out so that it would emerge—even Michelangelo never did that when it came to the

push. Gradually, the world has come around to the idea that this was all based on a superb modeling technique, which was then translated either in a semimechanical way into marble, or by casting into bronze. I was very encouraged in this by getting a letter from a sculptor in London, whose name I have forgotten. She had come across a book I did on the Parthenon sculptures, where I just mentioned that [idea] in passing, and she had talked to her friends in sculpture about it. They had said, "Yes, of course. This is the only way you can do it, there's no other way." There's no way one could ever do this except by having a completely worked out and modeled figure to work from, even to some detail, which is after all what Bernini did, what Rodin did, what everybody has done, producing realistic, idealized figures. You've got to do it this way.

Of course when you've got that technique you have all the incentive to make it real if you want to, because the model is around you. To get your foot right you've only got to look at your foot, and you model it to make it look right. You eventually start taking casts of your own feet, which is what they were doing in the fourth century, probably much more than we give credit for, and which is what Rodin was doing as well. This unity of technique led them, very, very rapidly, to total realism, which of course could never have led an Egyptian to do it, because he always worked from the outside in and had a totally different concept of what he wanted to produce. Realism wouldn't work for him, and

neither did any other ancient culture come to depend on major modeled work rather than carved work.

These ideas only came really from thinking about the Parthenon frieze in terms of pure iconography and politics and history and then looking at the sculpture itself a bit more closely, and doing the sculpture book and having to explain somehow why bronzes and marbles look exactly alike, and writing a bit about technique, and wondering why all the books about technique had never answered the questions that I wanted answered about how you made the thing in the first place and what you worked from.

SMITH: We've talked about the Parthenon, but what areas do you think you've most contributed to in terms of changing the way people now think of [Greek art?]

BOARDMAN: I don't know whether I changed the way they think at all. I don't think I'm the one to be able to say that, either. Many would say that all I've done is harden them in their views that Greek art was elitist and high quality and what-have-you. [laughter] I would like to think that in due course one would have done one's little bit to persuade them to see what the classical revolution really amounted to, in terms of this sort of thing, which is rather archaeological. It's technique, the way you do it, which leads you to be able to do other things which then occur to you to be worth trying to do. I would hope that what I've

done about the Greeks and their relationships with foreigners has helped in its way to put Greek culture in a better perspective with the cultures around it. Not diminishing it, but giving one a different view of it. It's funny, even the orientalist are still stuck with it; it's very odd. Sarah Morris and the others talk about Greece as being the eastern extremity of Europe, being faced by the eastern world. What they ought to be saying is that Greece is the western extremity of the east. It only becomes an individual power, culturally, in the fifth century, when it supersedes anything that had ever been taught them by Egypt or Syria or anyone else. It's much easier to regard Greece as an oriental country—today too, quite honestly—than as a European or a western one.

SMITH: Do you have any further questions?

LYONS: I was going to ask about your memberships in various other organizations, such as the [Society of] Antiquaries and the British Academy. How important has that been?

BOARDMAN: I was very pleased when I was made a fellow of the British Academy. I did quite a lot of work for them, I've been chairman of various things. Antiquaries are not very important. It was very nice to find that foreign academies would take me up and give me a fellowship or a membership. I've valued that much more than anything I've had in England, because it means that people who do the subject in France or Denmark or Germany seem to appreciate

it and think that it's worthwhile. Having several affiliations of that sort I prize very highly indeed—more, I would say, than simply getting the obvious things in Britain, because one feels you're not just fighting your corner in Oxford or in British archaeology, but you're doing something that other people are prepared to look at and find not totally unsatisfactory.

SMITH: Do the foreign memberships take much time?

BOARDMAN: None at all. I got the best job a few years ago. When Sir Ronald Syme died, I was made professor of ancient history of the Royal Academy. The Royal Academy has had a professor of ancient history since it was founded at the end of the eighteenth century. The first one I think was Oliver Goldsmith, and since then they've had people like Edward Gibbon and William Gladstone and the occasional archaeologist, like Wheeler. So I was made their professor of ancient history. No duties whatsoever. It was in their statute that they should have one, so they have one, and my only resultant duty from that is that I can go to the Royal Academy dinner every year, which is one of the grandest occasions in London. That's the best job I've got. [laughter]

SMITH: You didn't even have to give an inaugural lecture?

BOARDMAN: Nothing. I was invited to come and look round whenever I want to, and shown round the schools and their cast collection and that was interesting. I was prepared to do things for them if they wanted me to, but no. Francis

Haskell is the history of art professor. Eric Handley in Cambridge is for ancient literature. And Lord Bullock has just been made a supernumerary professor, which he's very pleased with. There is a possibility that we'll create a Royal Academy exhibition based on diffusion. We've started talking about it. It was their idea rather than mine, initially. But that's the affiliation that I've enjoyed.

I like puzzles. Not jigsaw puzzles or anything like that, but if there is a problem which has been pointed out by somebody else, or I have perceived, I feel, "It would be nice to solve that, wouldn't it?" That happened when Brunilde Ridgway [proposed] that one of the well-known wounded amazons of the fifth century was really early Roman. She said the only way one could really tell was by her belt. If one could analyze her belt and find out what that really was, we might be able to give her a date. I thought, "Here's a puzzle, there must be an answer to this. Let's try and find out what the answer is." First of all I looked at belts; it wasn't a belt. It was something that was used as a belt, but it wasn't a belt. What else can it be? I thought it might have been a sandal strap, but I couldn't find any sandal straps that looked like it, and then it dawned on me that it wasn't that at all; it was a horse rein. There was plenty of evidence, so I wrote it up and said, "Look, this is a horse rein. Amazons ride horses; she's broken her rein and she's using her rein as a belt. On the whole the form of it looks as though it belongs to the fifth century rather than Roman; in other words,

the date is what we always thought it was. I sent it off to the *AJA* and they showed it to Mary Littauer, who knows all about horses and harnesses. She came up with an exact parallel, of exactly the right shape, of exactly the right date; that was as near a fact as one could wish, to prove that that amazon was created in the fifth century and not in the Roman period.

I created a puzzle for myself, trying to work out what these rows of dots which you see on bodies on black-figure vases represent—this doesn't seem to have caught on so well. They are obviously not tattoos, because you put tattoos on parts of the body you can see, not on parts of the body you can't see. I thought they were old wounds, and they represented them in this way, on parts of the body which were vulnerable. Even animals which were being mauled by other animals would have them. That seemed to me to be an answer to something which people had observed on the figures for a long time. Not many seem to have quite followed that, but nobody's produced a better answer to it.

I'd love to be able to crack the south metopes of the Parthenon. There's a group of metopes in the middle which seem to be unknown, mysterious subjects, most of them only known from drawings now. The nearest I got to it was that they have no meaning at all, because they had been reused there from a different plan in which there were more of them, so they stuck them in the least conspicuous position, which was in the middle of the south side. It's since then

that various people have been arguing that, yes, there was a plan possibly, before they had the frieze, to have metopes in that position at each end. So who knows, perhaps these were completed before they changed the plan to have the frieze, and they just stuck them in there. Of course they don't make sense, because they're not a complete series. I'm not sure whether that'll work or not. But people work very hard trying to make sense of it, and nobody's produced a clear answer to it at all. It's playing with the subject, in a way, but in I hope a constructive way.

There were some vase fragments here, Greek vase fragments found in Egypt, which had been kicking about in Oxford for a very long time—fairly high quality. Everybody had looked at them; Payne had seen them, Beazley had seen them, Ashmole, Webster, Robert Cook and all the rest. They were pushing them around on the table, thinking they must make sense; you must be able to put these few fragments into a whole scene so that it would make sense. There was a bit of a boar's head, and bits of satyr figures. In fact it came to me more or less overnight. I woke up in the morning with the answer: the boar's head isn't a boar's head; it's the front of a ship, and what you've got is a ship of Dionysus being carried, with satyrs dancing about on it, and you put it all together and you can even see then the boar's head has a spike going up like the front of a ship. That was very pleasing to have put together. I made a little drawing of it and

showed it to Beazley. He said, "Yes, that must be right." They had been about the place with all the right people for twenty years or more, without them seeing it. It's a fun subject you know, it really is.

LYONS: What are the subjects do you think that people in classical archaeology will or should be turning to in the future?

BOARDMAN: I don't know that they need do anything very much different to what they've been doing already. I think there's a big backlog of important work which is not being done.

LYONS: Old excavation material?

BOARDMAN: Old excavation material. A lot of the clues for all this business about the Greeks in the east would be probably solved if Chicago would ever get around to publishing the Iron Age material from the Amug Plain excavations, which they haven't. There's an enormous debt of that sort which scholars owe to the subject, and which they can't be bothered with. Museums are groaning with material which people don't know anything about, which needs to be worked on and looked at; then, suddenly, many of the problems that we've got—not just physical problems—might be better solved.

Broader problems are there all the time. I find that there's an increasing band of non-archaeologist archaeologists who are basically ancient historians. There's a lot written nowadays about the origins of the polis and the development

of the polis, and one's getting increasingly the feeling that the polis is a modern historian's construct, which meant nothing whatsoever in antiquity. The ancient historians have been talking about the polis from their texts, which now the archaeologists are taking up and taking seriously. By trying to work out what is a polis and how does it develop into the Greek city state, they are having to ignore so much which shows that every city state was different from the next one and motivated with different principles of organization and policy. These rather mysterious and very old-fashioned concepts are still haunting us. It would be a good idea to stop hunting for the origins of the polis and just look a bit more closely at what we've actually got and see how different it was and probably admit that there were things much more like the Greek polis in Phoenicia, say. Tyre and Sidon were more like the ideal of the Greek polis than many Greek cities were.

That's been a bit bedeviled by fads and phases of talking about the principles of trade and what ports of trade are, and exchange and barter. But when you've got any evidence it's very, very diverse indeed. I think antiquity was a pretty mixed up place, and regular patterns of behavior don't emerge easily, so if you try to approach them with theory and models for it, they don't work, or you've got to strain the evidence not a little to make it look as though they work. The interest in it is its diversity. Spartans weren't Athenians and

they weren't Argives, but they all spoke Greek, yes, and they all knew their Homer. There were binding forces in their religion and their literature, but otherwise they are about as different as they possibly could be. Which is why they quite readily upped, armed, and slaughtered everyone in the next valley from time to time; there was no great fellow-feeling among the Greeks.

SMITH: This is sort of a technical question, but what has been the pattern for funding of archaeological work during your career? Have there been flush times and dry times?

BOARDMAN: Never really flush times. For most archaeological work in Greece—fieldwork or research work, looking at museums and things—the university has usually been as generous as it could be in terms of both time and in cash for travel. In an odd way, in the early days one always expected to have to pay a certain amount of it oneself. If the university gave you fifty pounds you'd spend another fifty pounds, though one could barely afford it. That was a different attitude to research and work. Nowadays you don't go if you don't get the other fifty pounds. The academy acquired more money for research of this sort and backed excavations. There has been much more necessity recently for people to go out into the business world and find people to back things. The main problem one has in the university nowadays, not so much at my level, is that there are more and more students and less and less money for them. They

are having to spend more on their life here; they have to subsidize their own work in some way. They don't even get a full grant nowadays. We've got more and more graduates, but the money for travel grants, which is in usually sequestered funds—not regular income but funds which have been given by somebody a hundred years ago from which they use the interest—doesn't increase. So the financial problems of research have grown quite considerably over the years.

SMITH: But if, as you were saying just a few minutes ago, there's so much work that needs to be done on the excavation findings that are just sitting there, that changes the nature of the kind of travel and research that needs to be done.

BOARDMAN: Well, it ought to, but everyone wants to go and dig something up. I'd feel much happier if everyone just stopped digging, because you know that a high percentage of what they are going to find will never get published, but a certain percentage of destruction of antiquity [will occur], so what you are sanctioning is an unpredictable operation. The same amount of money could go to rescuing and publishing and making available the mass of stuff there is about the place still. People aren't ashamed of this, and the very same people who do this are the ones that set up a cry about these wicked collectors. They are much more wicked. The collector's spending money. He's got money, he can spend it; let him spend it. People make money along the way, this is the way world

works, it's business. Why should business in antiquities be different from business in washing machines? But these people, who are scholars, devoted to the preservation and acquisition of knowledge of antiquity, are destroying it, then sitting on it, and never quite getting around to publishing it.

SMITH: What's your role been in terms of advising or participating in disbursement of funds for archaeological research?

BOARDMAN: I used to do quite a bit through the British Academy—they've given that up now to another research board, which is pretty disastrous I think—and of course with the funds in Oxford. When it's funds for students doing their work that's one thing, but when it's for a major excavation I've always tried very hard to make sure that that money wouldn't go to anyone who still had an outstanding obligation of publication. The British School at Athens has tried to enforce this rule, but one or two slip under the net because they don't notice. So you don't get any money or encouragement to go and dig a site until you've finished and published the last one. I would add to that, though I don't think they always do, that promises are not enough. It's no good saying it'll be done in six months. I've never yet met anyone doing an excavation publication who has a met a deadline that he has given himself. I learnt that from editing all these supplementary papers of excavations in twenty-five years at the British School at Athens. No excavator ever produced his publication when he said he would.

Some many years later, or never.

SMITH: It does seem in general that excavation reports take a tremendous amount of time to produce.

BOARDMAN: But it's a predictable amount of time. You ought to be able to know how long it's going to take and you shouldn't undertake an excavation unless you can see your way to the working up of it and the publication of it in terms both of time and money. If you can't do that you shouldn't be in the business. But people do, all the time.

I don't know if it happens in the States as it has in Britain, but museum curators and assistant keepers are more interested in getting on with their own research than in making known the contents of their collections. The feeling I had when I went into the Ashmolean Museum, and many others still do have, is, "Here's a wonderful collection. Let's work on it and let people know what we've got." And that [attitude] has gone very largely. There were some blatant examples of that in other museums, like the Victoria and Albert, for instance. When Mrs. Estève Coll, who I admire enormously, got in there, she sacked half the academic staff because they had been sitting on their bottoms writing their own books for the last generation and doing absolutely nothing for the collection. Of course the whole museum world went up in arms about it, but she did exactly the right thing.

SMITH: How much does this have to do with the Ph.D. glut that's occurred in the last thirty years?

BOARDMAN: I don't think it has very much to do with it in our subject. I don't see how it would work on it particularly.

SMITH: We have many more Ph.D.s than there ever used to be, and of course with job competition—

BOARDMAN: Yes, but while you're working on a Ph.D. you're not also curating a museum.

SMITH: No, but in order to become a museum curator you have to have a Ph.D., which is something that's approximately twenty years old now. One could go into a museum in the United States with a B.A. and I presume it would have been similar in Britain.

BOARDMAN: Yes. But I still don't think that this affects that particular phenomenon which I've mentioned about a growing lack of concern for the collections. There's as much of an obligation, in a way, with a collection, to make it known and available to the world, as there is to make your finds known from an excavation. I think this museum's been very bad about this. Some areas of it are very good in antiquities—the oriental collections, the Egyptian collections are not bad. But people would come to the Ashmolean in the days when you could see everything and say, "What a wonderful collection of vases."

When you look around there are only three *Corpora Vasorum*, and there ought to be about twelve. There's an interesting collection of sculptures, some of the oldest sculpture in Britain. Where's the catalog? There isn't one. We've got a wonderful collection of terra-cottas collected by Evans in south Italy. Where's the catalog? There isn't one. Bronzes? There are some superb bronzes.

Where's the catalog? There isn't one. It's an appalling record.

LYONS: Hopefully these database projects will begin to unite lots of this kind of material and give new impetus—

BOARDMAN: Yes, but somebody's got to put the stuff on, and it ought to be somebody who knows the material, but the attitude here and many other places would be, "Oh well, we'll hire some graduates out of work and they can type away and put all the figures in." That's not good enough.

SMITH: The last thirty years has also been a period of tremendous dissension and strife within archaeology. I'm thinking about the debates over the new archaeology, and anthropological versus classical background, etc. Do you have any explanation yourself for why there are these kinds of debates?

BOARDMAN: No, it's all mixed up with football hooliganism I expect.

[laughter] It's the mood of the times. Classical archaeology has escaped much of this because much of it didn't impinge on it or have anything to offer to it. Some of it did. I think anthropology has done more than anything else, which

has been good. People like Sally [Sarah C.] Humphreys, in her use of anthropology—she's quite a good classical archaeologist—was finding things which could apply, so the sort of books which are written now about death and society have altered very considerably because of this. We have been made to ask the sorts of questions which weren't being asked before, and that I think has been the most useful part of it. I don't think it's been over bitter. Herbert Hoffmann, who is a charming man, a very dear friend, a very good classical archaeologist of the normal sort, went and took too deep a draught of anthropology at both Cambridge and Oxford.

SMITH: How much reading have you done in anthropology, or to what degree is it useful?

BOARDMAN: Not a great deal. I read Sally Humphreys because I think she's very clever and she has something to say about it. I don't know that I would learn a great deal reading anthropological monographs, though I certainly did read some of the more general anthropological books. For instance, when we did the burial customs book, one read the basic [Emile] Durkheim and the rest on what death was really all about. Some of it was not irrelevant, but the best it does is to make you begin to think of different approaches or ask different questions. It never provides any answers. Sometimes there aren't any answers.

SMITH: I wasn't able to look at the *Eros in Greece* book because it's been

checked out permanently.

BOARDMAN: I can give you either a Swedish or a German edition if you want. [laughter] You know, I'm getting rid of books right, left, and center. I found a little cache of them in other languages. Why did I do that? It seemed fun at the time. My part of it was a rather bland essay on the role of love and sex in antiquity, and partly spun up around the imaginary life of a young man in Athens and the way he lived and what he did and how sex related to it. The other half of the book was basically dirty pictures with descriptions and comments by a very good Italian archaeologist, [Eugenio] La Rocca.

It's a funny mixture of a book. I can't remember why I did it. They probably offered a lot of money. It was not a subject that I wanted to move away from. I felt it would be fun, I'd find out a bit about this and read different things as a result. It gave me a little bit of an exercise too in attempting to reconstruct in narrative form what life and behavior could have been like in Athens. I did this in the Parthenon book in a rather less successful way, in trying to provide a narrative of people looking at the Parthenon just after it had been opened or completed and explaining to foreigners what it all meant. It must have happened, and it must have been apparent from the Parthenon. If you try to [present] it in that way, perhaps you help yourself get a little bit closer to understanding why it was done in that way. So I did that because it wasn't going to take very long,

and it gave me the opportunity to learn and read a bit about things that I hadn't bothered with before. There can be a limit to the amount of extra things you can take on board, but this was obviously not irrelevant to other interests.

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